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Council polls: Talks on to choose candidates

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Kengeri skywalk is underutilised

BENGALURU
Though a skywalk was built near the busy Kengeri Satellite Bus Terminal two years ago, a non-functional lift has forced people to choose crossing a dangerous road over the safe skywalk. » Page 2

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31 killed as rain, landslips wreak havoc in northeast

Mizoram is the worst affected with 27 deaths in four incidents of landslips, more than 30 are feared dead, say officials; parts of Assam, Meghalaya, and Mizoram continue to be without power

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Storms and rain-induced landslips in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal killed at least 31 people and injured several across three northeastern States on Tuesday.

Mizoram is the worst affected with 27 confirmed deaths in four incidents of landslips. Officials in the State said the death toll could be more than 30 as an "uncertain number" of people have been reported missing, some buried under debris.

Assam followed with three storm-related deaths – one each in Kamrup, Kamrup (Metropolitan), and Morigaon districts.

One person died in the East Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya after a wall collapsed in heavy rain.

Disaster-hit: Rescue teams look for survivors in the debris next to a stone quarry that collapsed near Aizawl in Mizoram. REUTERS

Disaster management officials in the three States said the rain, accompanied by winds with speeds of up to 60 km per hour, uprooted trees and electric poles, triggered landslips, and disrupted power and Internet services. Some parts of Assam, Meghalaya, and Mizoram continued to be without power since Monday midnight.

Stone quarry collapses

A Mizoram government report collated from the District Disaster Management Authorities said 14 people, including two minors, were killed and one injured when a stone quarry collapsed on National Highway 6 – the State's lifeline – near Melthum close to capital Aizawl.

Landslips at Hlimen, Salem, Falkawn, Aibawk, Lungsei, and Kelsih in and around Aizawl killed 13 others.

Eight people were reported missing from the site where the stone quarry collapsed. More people were missing elsewhere in the State, officials said.

Aizawl and adjoining areas have been landslip-prone with several areas marked sinking zones.

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma announced an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each for the next of kin of the local people who died.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

People being rescued in boats from flood-hit Moolepadam in Kalamassery, Kochi district.

Six killed as heavy rain batters Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

After a brief hiatus, rain triggered by a cyclonic circulation intensified across Kerala, wreaking havoc and causing severe waterlogging in many places.

Kochi recorded around 103 mm of rain in just one hour. Kottayam witnessed a landslip. Six people have lost their lives in rain-related incidents in the State.

FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 7

SC tells Kejriwal to move CJI for listing bail extension plea

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A Vacation Bench of the Supreme Court declined to list an application filed by Arvind Kejriwal seeking an extension of his interim bail by seven days in a money laundering case linked to the liquor policy 'scam'.

The Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and K.V. Viswanathan on Tuesday said it cannot intervene in an application filed in a case already reserved for judgment by another Bench of the court.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta had reserved judgment on the Delhi Chief Minister's petition to quash his arrest by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in the case chargesheeted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Arvind Kejriwal

While reserving the case for judgment on May 17, Justice Khanna's Bench had given Mr. Kejriwal the liberty to apply for statutory bail under Section 45 of the PMLA.

On Tuesday, the Vacation Bench told senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, who orally mentioned the application for extension of interim bail for urgent hearing, to approach the Chief Justice of India for "appropriate orders" for listing.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Court acquits Dera chief in murder case

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Tuesday acquitted Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and four others in a case of murder of the sect's former manager Ranjit Singh in 2002.

The sect chief, who was also serving a 20-year jail term for raping two of his disciples, is currently lodged in a jail in Rohtak, Haryana.

Ranjit Singh, also a follower of the sect, was shot dead on July 10, 2002, at Khanpur Kolian in Kurukshetra. He was allegedly murdered for his suspected role in the circulation of an anonymous letter, which narrated how women were being sexually exploited by the sect head at the Dera headquarters. In October 2021, a special CBI court in Panchkula sentenced Ram Rahim and four others to life imprisonment.

Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Sandeshkhali attack: CBI files chargesheet

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a chargesheet against seven arrested accused, including suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan, in connection with the attack on Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials in Sandeshkhali of West Bengal on January 5.

On March 5, the Calcutta High Court directed the Central agency to conduct an investigation into the incident.

"Investigation in the case revealed that Sheikh Shahjahan was the key conspirator behind the incident... in which ED officials were attacked when they went to conduct a search on his residential and official premises, in a case alleging money laundering related to proceeds of crime generated from the irregularities in procurement, processing/milling/fortification and distribution of ration through PDS scheme," said the agency on Tuesday.

Various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act have been invoked against the accused, who included Mr. Shahjahan's brother Sekh Alomgir. Further investigation in the case was under way.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Students of classes 1 to 10 in govt., aided schools to have spoken English classes

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) will introduce spoken English classes for students of classes 1 to 10 in government and aided schools from the academic year 2024-25. It plans to conduct the 40-minute class every Saturday. Activities such as conversation, dialogue, script, role play, storytelling, situation explanation, and experience sharing will be part of the spoken English class.

The proposal for spoken English classes has been made in the department's 'Educational Guidelines' of 2024-25, which was released recently.

A DSEL official said spoken English training at the school level will help students prepare for future education and exams. FILE PHOTO

Learning English has been a challenge for students of rural areas, and English is essential to crack competitive exams such as Joint Entrance Exam, National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, and Common Entrance Test, which are gateways to professional courses like engineering and medicine. "Providing spoken English training from the school level will be helpful for students for their future education and competitive exams. It is also helpful in increasing enrolment in government schools," said an official of the DSEL.

A spoken English manual should be prepared by the Graduate Primary Teacher (GPT) English Language Teachers Team to help students learn to speak fluently in the language. During the third period every Saturday, students should be spoken to only in English for the entire period, the guidelines say. It also suggested that teachers should conduct spoken English classes, and if required, outside skilled resource persons may be utilised.

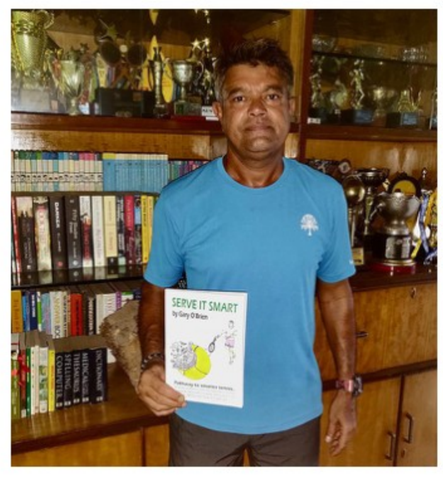
B.B. Cauvery, Commissioner of Public Instruction, said, "We have a mega plan to introduce spoken English sessions from classes 1 to 10, with the Samagra Shiksha-Karnataka, the Department of State Educational Research and Training, and the Regional Institute of English from the academic year 2024-25 in a phased manner."

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

Serving it smart is the way forward for aspiring Indian tennis players

Coach Gary O'Brien, who has more than 30 years of experience, talks about things to do in order to achieve success and excellence on the professional Tour

Kamesh Srinivasan



Tennis is a lovely game. Most enjoy it, by playing or watching the very best in action, especially at the Grand Slams.

As the action at Roland Garros unfolded on Sunday, India had two of its best, Rohan Bopanna and Sumit Nagal, trying to represent it in the best possible way.

While Bopanna is self-made, even though many coaches and experts have guided him over the years, Nagal has primarily been groomed by the multiple Slam champion Mahesh Bhupathi.

While Bopanna's game is a classic blend of timing and technique, Nagal is more physical as he runs around the court like a hare, unleashing his explosive forehand to find his way forward in a very highly competitive game.

Bopanna has clarity of mind and a very subtle understanding of the game that has seen him rise to No. 1 in the doubles world.

Over the years, there is a general perception that Indians mature late in sports. But none would have expected the Indians to mature so brilliantly. At 43, even as Bopanna keeps clarifying that it is not age 43, but Level-43, he redefined the understanding of the game by winning the Australian Open men's doubles title.

Into Level-44, Bopanna is looking around to have the best partner for the Paris Olympics as he is eligible to have his choice since he is a top-10 player.

The love for the game drives players to being disciplined and follow a work ethic – traits that will help a player find his or her way into the sport. However, the world is driven by commerce. Money is the attraction that draws aspirants to many fields and makes them pursue it with passion, irrespective of competence.

Pot of gold

Tennis offers a pot of gold, but it is not easy to reach. And understandably so. The men's and women's singles champions will get €2.4 million this time at Roland Garros. However, what is immediately attractive for everyone is the fact that the first-round loser is assured of €73,000 (₹65.81 lakh).

Yet, it is a lot of money for losing. Though Nagal has the potential to burst into the top-50 rankings – he lost to Karen Khachanov in the first round in Paris – why is it that there only one Indian in that league? There is a big population and enough people playing the game across the country to have a better representation.

The easiest conclusion is that in India, there's no system to generate a battery of world-class players. The truth is that there are so many variables in tennis that it is not easy to master, with or without a system. There is so much competition around the world, especially Europe and USA, that it is hard to scale the slippery ranking ladder.

At the lower levels is the maximum struggle. but it is rewarding when one enters the top-200. Otherwise, players end up only spending on the game even though they may have ventured into the professional circuit with the belief to earn good money.

There are no dearth of good coaches, high-quality academies and experts for nurturing the physical aspect, and get the players mentally ready. Some of the players have the resources to camp in Europe and USA for long, and learn the game in the best possible way. Still, most find the path so complicated that only the rich manage to pursue the game and it becomes increasingly unaffordable for the rest. For the young aspirants who may have the talent and hunger to excel, there are not many public courts. But that is a different topic.

In such a scenario, it was refreshing to get a call from coach Gary O'Brien and know about his book *Serve it Smart*. Curious to find out what it offered, the book was completed in quick time, not just because it was thin but it was unique and had many gems to offer.

Keeping a low profile

The quality in the work of a relatively unknown coach, who generally keeps a low profile and preserves his energy for his wards on the court, put things in perspective.

It was exciting to find the coach summarise his experience of more than 30 years and offer the essence to the world, making the book priceless.

Knowledge is available in abundance thanks to the internet and the ocean of social media, but this was significantly relevant in the Indian context.

> I had a plan in place for what I was going to do on court every day for 365 days. I still have those sheets written in pencil which I share with coaches at the courses I run. The paper is parched and 32 years old
>
> **O'BRIEN**

Was he so bored with coaching that O'Brien chose to write a book and be done with the game? The truth is the opposite. He still has the enthusiasm and energy to teach the game.

"If I had a chance to turn back the clock and restart a career, I would choose to be a tennis coach all over again. I love the job and it has given me so many opportunities to mould myself as a human being too. By God's grace, hard work and the support of my family, I have had a great career so far," said O'Brien, reflecting on his journey as a coach.

He has done various stints in many centres, at home and abroad. O'Brien was trained to last long as a coach, thanks to the foundation laid by Dr. Vece Paes, who was part of the hockey medal-winning team at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

O'Brien's career as a coach with Dr. Paes, at *Paes en Sport*, started in the summer of 1992.

"Dr. Paes called me and asked if I would like to start coaching. It was a lovely idea and I jumped at it immediately. The next morning I met him at his residence, and he had many books and manuals on the table. He asked me to read them and prepare three sets of programmes (52 weeks each) for beginners, intermediate and advanced players. It was an overwhelming task which left a lifelong impression and put me on the track of what I was destined to do," recalled O'Brien.

It took him three weeks, working for nine hours a day, to get the three sets of programmes ready.

"I had a plan in place for what I was going to do on court every day for 365 days. I still have those sheets written in pencil which I share with coaches at the courses I run. The paper is parched and 32 years old," said O'Brien, emphasising the wealth of experience.

"When I took it to Dr. Paes, he responded by saying that he didn't want to read it, but it was my Holy Bible and that I should use it well. I worked with Dr. Paes for 10 years. I learnt everything in those enjoyable years... hard work, passion, attention to detail, striving for perfection, paper work, administration, running events and tournaments, attending workshops, everything. Sitting besides Dr. Paes was an honour and an opportunity to become the best person and the best coach I could ever be," said O'Brien.

He was also lucky to have a very close look at the way Dr. Paes influenced the growth of his son Leander into a world-class athlete, winning an improbable Olympic medal in singles, multiple Grand Slam titles in doubles and mixed doubles, becoming world No. 1, and beating some of the very best in Davis Cup and on the professional Tour.

"Dr. Paes, without a doubt, is the best tennis parent I have ever seen. He did a marvellous job of shaping Leander's career. I saw the hard work, the sleepless nights, the insanity of raising funds... father and son were a great team," said O'Brien.

He was naturally floored by Leander's talent and attitude. "Leander was supremely talented, the best the sport has seen. He is a role model, any Indian player's dream and when you are with Leander, it is just Leander. What a fantastic guy!" gushed O'Brien.

When he was at the helm of the young National team in 2001, he saw the blossoming of Sania Mirza.

"Sania was just 15 and already No. 35 in the ITF junior world rankings. That forehand was a trademark even then," he recalled.

When Leander and Dr. Paes took the young Sunil Kumar, the left-handed prodigy from Punjab who won the National men's title at the age of 16, O'Brien was able to spot the talent. It was not just Sunil, but a bunch of other promising young players like Amanjot Singh, Vinod Sewa, Chandrashekar Mohanty and Rupesh Roy who were part of the elite programme at *Paes en Sport*.

"Sunil was in a class of his own and had the talent for a great future. Unfortunately, the financial commitments were too much for Sewa and Rupesh were also very talented, but the financial constraints restricted their growth," felt O'Brien.

Big pool of good coaches

He is thrilled to see the growth in the Indian coaching scene, thanks to many education programmes both at the National and international levels. O'Brien does believe that there is a big pool of good coaches in the country.

Still, there is no dearth of talented young players going to Europe and USA, investing a fortune to grow as professional players.

"The grass is always greener in your neighbour's garden. Our Indian coaches are as good, maybe even better than the foreign ones. There is nothing wrong with the Indian coaching system, up to a level, after which the players need to transit. If you want to be a top player, you have to spend some time in Europe. That is the epicentre," he said.

O'Brien did have stints in Australia, USA and Bangladesh, but chose to stay in India.

"I wanted to see and experience what it was all about. Getting there, I realised we did the same things back home.

> The grass is always greener in your neighbour's garden. Our Indian coaches are as good, maybe even better than the foreign ones. There is nothing wrong with the Indian coaching system, up to a level, after which the players need to transit

Parents and trainees need to trust the coaches. I always felt that my services would benefit Indian tennis," he said.

O'Brien has three sons – Kemp (23), Wyatt (19) and Heath (16).

"Wyatt is a tennis player and is now playing the pro circuit. We have a goal to get him into the Davis Cup squad by 22. To be a tennis parent is not easy. In my book, I have very clearly laid the pathway for parents. Become a Dr. Paes. Stay away from areas that are not your forte, create a healthy atmosphere at home. They are kids. There is a life beyond tennis. One of the greatest challenges of my life is to be a dad and coach. I worked hard at it. We worked hard at it as a family," he said.

When asked about the prescription for Indian tennis, O'Brien was honest and forthright.

"We need indoor facilities. We have brutal summers going straight into monsoon. We lose about four to five months of quality time. The rest of the world has made that transition to indoor facilities. Another important aspect is that players need to be exposed to a variety of competitive formats. We play too many junior tournaments with not much transition into the pro circuit," he said.

O'Brien is associated with many tennis centres in Delhi, Gurugram, Kolkata and Puri.

"We are setting up a state-of-the-art residential tennis academy in Puri. I am also in the process of launching my own coaches' education programme," he revealed.

It will not be fair to reveal the gems of O'Brien's book as it is necessary to go through the work and extract the best out of it.

If he had to capsule his more than three-decade experience, what would be his suggestions to the young players?

"Have the courage to share your thoughts and goals with your parents and coaches. Communicate what they need and desire, If the voice in one's head is not theirs, it is not their dream that they are living. Make sure about enjoying what one does. The goals should be realistic and achievable. Winning and losing is for the spectators... when you are on court, always give 100%. Keep a diary, record everything – thoughts, emotions, content of practice sessions, drills, performance and daily goals," said O'Brien, quite delighted to share his knowledge.

His biggest advice, of course, is to "Serve it smart".

THE GIST

- O'Brien said he was lucky to have a close look at the way Dr. Vece Paes influenced the growth of his son Leander into a world-class athlete
- He revealed that he was setting up a state-of-the-art academy in Puri
- O'Brien, who has always kept a low profile, wanted the budding players to have the courage to share their thoughts and goals with the parents and coaches

Official arrested for misappropriation of ₹47 crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations had allegedly approved payments for contract works that were not done at all

CID officials arrested S. Shankarappa, Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations, on Monday for alleged misappropriation of ₹47 crore in the D. Devaraj Urs Truck Terminal Ltd., a State government undertaking, where he worked as Managing Director.

The investigation found that Shankarappa had allegedly approved payments for contract works that were not done at all.

Fake documents

The CID confirmed that the DDUTTL has suffered a loss of ₹47.1 crore. Shankarappa, who was taken into custody, is alleged to have created fake documents.

In October 2021, a meeting was held to discuss the proposed renovation work for the terminal, and it was decided to give the contract on a piece-work basis. Shankarappa allegedly created fake documents and sanctioned the money even though work was not done. The scam came to light when the present MD, C.N. Shivaprakash, verified the documents and filed a complaint with the Wilson Garden police on September 23, 2023.

Files seized

The CID took over the case, and after a detailed probe, it was confirmed that DDUTTL had suffered a loss of ₹47.1 crore and 782 files related to illegal work orders were seized during a recent raid.

Following the investigation, the police arrested Shankarappa who had applied for anticipatory bail.

Skywalk at Kengeri remains underutilised in the absence of functional elevators

Though the skywalk was built two years ago, a non-functional lift has forced the disabled, elderly and even young people, to choose crossing a dangerous road over the safe skywalk

Adithi A. and Abhilekh Baruah
BENGALURU

Elderly people crossing the road near the Kengeri Satellite Bus Terminal in Bengaluru. ADITI A.

Carrying a suitcase and a laptop, Joseph George, a resident of Fraser Town in his mid-40s, crosses over to the other side of the road to wait for his bus near the busy Kengeri Satellite Bus Terminal in Bengaluru. Ironically, a huge skywalk overlooks this dangerous road crossing. In the absence of a functional elevator or escalator, travellers prefer the road to the skywalk.

"As long as the barricades are not there, everyone will continue to cross the road and not use the skywalk. To get people to use the skywalk, you need to put the barricades back in place," Mr. George said.

A passenger from Ramanagara, waiting for her bus, said, "Especially older people, struggle to use the skywalk, particularly when they have luggage. Women on their periods or those who are pregnant find it hard to climb the stairs. Traffic police often help passengers cross the road because of the heavy traffic. An escalator or lift would help passengers reach the other side without crossing the road." Rakshita R. Gowda, a postgraduate student from Kengeri, said, "The bus stops are opposite each other, so people prefer crossing the road instead of going across the skywalk."

Elderly face difficulty

Traffic personnel at the Kengeri bus stop said the skywalk was built two years ago, but the lift still doesn't work. "We initially put up two barricades to cover the crossing, but elderly and disabled people had difficulties climbing the stairs and crossing the road. So, we opened the barricades to help them," he said. However, he added that young people were also crossing the road now, creating a rush.

"Despite complaints from several people, no action has been taken yet. If the lift is made functional, we will definitely close the barricade again," he added. "A lift would help people use the skywalk as this highway is an accident zone. When people cross the road, the vehicles must stop each time to let them pass," said Dhananjaya, a resident of Kengeri.

Elevator in 15 days

Until upgrades are made, the skywalk remains underutilised, leaving pedestrians vulnerable to accidents. Asked when the skywalk would become more accessible, a BBMP official said, "The elevator will be operable in 15 days, after which we will put the barricades back to cover the crossing."

BJP seeks ₹1,000 cr. for development of Bengaluru

Members of the BJP staging a protest against the State government in Bengaluru on Tuesday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok on Tuesday urged the State government to release ₹1,000 crore immediately to take up pre-monsoon work in Bengaluru amidst protests by the BJP against the Congress government's alleged failure to initiate any new development projects in the city.

"The Congress government has ignored the needs of Bengaluru. Potholes have appeared on roads, and garbage is strewn around. The government does not have money to pay pourakarmikas and contractors. No new development works have been taken up in the city," Mr. Ashok told reporters after participating in the BJP's protest here on Tuesday.

He said, "The protest is to urge the government to release ₹1,000 crore to take up pre-monsoon work and ensure that no untoward incidents take place.

The government has converted 'Brand Bengaluru' to 'Bad Bengaluru'. Citizens in Bengaluru pay the highest tax in the State."

Referring to the death of the Valmiki Development Corporation official, Mr. Ashok said the Chief Minister should resign. "Ministers are responsible for the officer's suicide. About ₹187 crore scam has taken place, and the officer has named those who are responsible for this in his death note. The government is directly responsible for the ₹187 crore scam. The Chief Minister said he would resign if he had taken money; let him resign now."

Addressing protesters, BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra remarked that the Congress government's achievement in the last year was zero. He said no place in the State had seen a foundation laying for development works.

NSUI members blacken nameboard of Savarkar on Yelahanka flyover

NSUI members hanging a banner that reads 'Bhagat Singh Flyover' over the signboard of Veer Savarkar Flyover in Bengaluru. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Another political tussle between the Congress and the BJP unfolded on Tuesday, the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Veer Savarkar, as three members of the National Students' Union of India blackened his name on the board put up on the Yelahanka flyover.

Lakshya Raj, Nishchay Gowda, and Naveen, along with others, staged a protest demanding that the name on the board should be replaced with that of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. While traffic was disrupted, the three blackened Savarkar's name with ink.

The police rushed to the spot, detained and brought them to the station. Based on a complaint by BBMP officials, the police registered an FIR.

Condemning the incident, Yelahanaka MLA S.R. Vishwanath and his supporters staged a protest demanding strict action against the trio. The protesters demanded an investigation and the arrest of those involved. They warned of a bandh if the government failed to act. The police have now been deployed at the spot.

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra alleged that the Congress government was trying to divert public attention from its failures. Condemning the incident of "using one freedom fighter to insult another freedom fighter", he said the NSUI members had insulted both towering personalities.

Techie 'digitally arrested' for three days by cybercriminals, loses ₹31.3 lakh

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 26-year-old software engineer from Cox Town lost ₹31.3 lakh from her bank accounts after becoming a victim of a courier scam and being "digitally arrested" by cybercrooks.

'Parcel with drugs'

The incident unfolded on Monday when she was at her office around 5.30 p.m.

The caller, introducing himself as a courier company representative, said there was a parcel in her name destined for Taiwan containing drugs, passports, and laptops. Based on this, a case had been filed in the Mumbai crime branch.

The caller also shared the victim's Aadhaar number, name, and phone number to convince her that the call was genuine. She received another call on Skype, and this time, the caller claimed to be Balsingh Rajputh, DCP, cybercrime, who told her that there was a case and he needed to question her.

Bank details accessed

The caller asked her not to cut the call and not to inform anyone until the inquiry was over.

Shocked, the victim followed the instructions for three days.

On the pretext of inquiry, the caller accessed all the bank details and instructed her to transfer the money to check if there was any money laundering happening from her account.

The caller even assured her that the transactions would be reverted 50 minutes after verification. The fraud came to light when she tried to call back but got no response. Realising that she was conned, the victim started checking the internet for the police control room number to report the case and found several articles online about the scam. Even though the husband, a software engineer, was at home, he was not allowed to be involved.

'Plaints didn't work'

Her distress continued as the emergency response call to report cybercrime cases (1930) was allegedly not working.

The couple rushed to the bank and requested the manager to stop the payment as they were scammed, but the official allegedly refused to help, citing technical reasons.

With no other option left, the couple rushed to the nearest police station. The police directed them to another station before the couple reached the East Division cybercrime police station.

"Though the police were cooperative and tried to help track down the transactions to stop the payment, the bank officials did not help.

Despite repeated requests from the police, senior executives of the bank disconnected calls, citing that they could not help," the victims alleged. With limited resources, the police finally managed to freeze around 10% of the total amount and asked the couple to approach the court and get a direction to get the amount released from the bank.

CCB unearths CDR sale racket, 10 people arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Women Protection Wing of the Central Crime Branch has unearthed a Call Record Details sale racket and arrested 10 people who were allegedly operating under detective agencies to probe matrimonial issues. Based on a tip-off, a team led by Soumya N., police inspector, raided Rajadhani Corporate Service situated at Govindarajanagar and arrested the owner Purushtoham and six of his associates.

The accused, according to the police, have not taken a licence from the authority concerned to run the business and using their network accessed confidential CDR of 43 people to share it with anti-social elements and with their contacts who have matrimonial disputes. This racket, according to a senior police officials, also leads to the possible involvement of police officials.

Police bust gang involved in mobile thefts

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Siddapura police on Tuesday arrested a 28-year-old man from Jharkhand, who, along with his three associates, allegedly stole 32 mobile phones worth ₹19.5 lakh.

The accused was allegedly caught red-handed while he was trying to sell a stolen mobile phone to passers-by in Someshwaranagar on Sunday. The accused was taken into custody and detailed questioning allegedly led him to confess his crime.

Timings
BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, MAY. 29	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 00:00	SET 11:03
THURSDAY, MAY. 30	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 00:05	SET 12:00
FRIDAY, MAY. 31	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:42
RISE 00:48	SET 12:55

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	32	23
Bengaluru	32	22

Bengaluru Today
32°C A dry weather to prevail. Morning will be pleasant Day will be little warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant. Thunderstorm may occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm and humid. Night will comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
NETAJI SUBHAS SOUTHERN CENTRE, BENGALURU
Date: 27/05/2024

ADVERTISEMENT

The applications are invited for Empanelment of Advocates for representing SAI at various Courts i.e CAT, High Court, Supreme Court of India and in all Subordinate Courts on behalf of Sports Authority of India, Netaji Subhash Southern Centre, Bengaluru. Last date of submission of the application is 15/06/2024.

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Sd/-
Executive Director
Sports Authority of India, NSSC, Bengaluru.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Mr. ROUSHON ALOM S/o.Mr.Abdul Motleb Sheikh** is intending to purchase **"Schedule Property"** and being more fully described in the Schedule hereunder, from its owners **Mrs.ANJUM AFSHAN & Mrs. SUFIYA SANOBER.** If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim in respect of the Said Property, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Residential Vacant **Site bearing No.228,** New BBMP Katha No. 12/15/228, Old V.P. Katha No.66, Carved out of converted Sy.No.12/15, vide Order No. BDIS ALN SR (SA)33/1996-97, dated 29-08-1996, issued by the DC, Bangalore District, Bangalore, in the Layout known as **"Anam Enclave",** situated at **Thanisandra Village, Krishnarajapura Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk Bangalore** and site measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 Feet, in all **1200 Sq.feet** and bounded on::

East by: Site No.230, West by: Site No. 225, North by: Site No. 227 and, South by: Road.

M/s.RASHI LEGAL
Advocates and Legal Consultants,
No.B2-1250/51, 'Manu Teja Towers',
A. Dasarahalli, Magadi Main Road,
Bangalore - 560 079.
M-9916559198

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that our client **Mr.Bhaskar Reddy S/o Late.Sri.Krishna Reddy** is an absolute owner of Property described below, the same was acquired by **Sri.Prabhakar Reddy** vide Regd Sale Deed 13/10/1980 and later partitioned the same along with his brothers one among is Mr.Bhaskar Reddy vide Regd Partition Deed dt 05/03/2014 and property measuring 7553 Sq.ft in Sy.No.28 was allotted to the share of Mr.Bhaskar Reddy, thus the said Mr.Bhaskar Reddy started enjoying the above Property as sole and absolute owner and later he decided to sell the portion of said property described in the Schedule herein in favour of **Sri.A.Charan Raj.**

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim in respect of the Said Property, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of portion of Property bearing **Site No.8,** BBMP Khata No.675/28, Situated at **Atturu Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore,** Measuring East to West 52.5 Feet and North to South 23 Feet totally **1205 Sq ft** and bounded on:

East by: Property belongs to K.Prabhakar Reddy & G.Venkatachalam Reddy, **West by:** 30 feet Road, **North by:** Remaining Portion of the Site No.8 belongs to Mr.Bhaskar Reddy, **South by:** Portion of Site No.8c belongs to Reddy Naik measuring 1582 Sq ft.

M/s.RASHI LEGAL
Advocates and Legal Consultants,
No.B2-1250/51, 'Manu Teja Towers',
A. Dasarahalli, Magadi Main Road,
Bangalore - 560 079.
M-9916559198

EAST COAST RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM-1 to
Tender No.:-
SNTPBBS-042024-VSS

The Corrigendum/Changes/Modification has been made against the above mentioned tender notice.

Previous Description	Modified/Description/ Should be read as
Are Joint Venture (JV) Firms allowed to Bid: NO	Are Joint Venture (JV) Firms allowed to Bid: YES

For detailed corrigendum please visit website: www.ireps.gov.in. All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

Asst. Signal & Telecom Engineer/Proj.-I/Bhubaneswar
PR-20/CH/24-25

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that Mr.Shivakumar Sundaram and Mrs.Aarthi Shivakumar, being the absolute owners of Residential Apartment bearing **No.B-1301,** in the Thirteenth Floor, measuring **1071 Sq.Ft** of Super Built-up area, **219 Sq.ft** of Proportionate share in the common areas, and totally measuring **1290 Sq.ft,** along with right to use One Top covered Car Parking space in the Basement/Ground Level in the project known as **"BRIXTON",** along with **480.88 Sq.Ft** of Undivided share, title, interest in Municipal No.1, in the records of City Municipal Council of Mahadevapura, measuring 7543.40 Sq.Mtrs, situated at **Doddanekundi II Phase Industrial Area Mahadevpura Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk** and bounded on;-

East by : Open towards Open Space in 'BRIXTON' Block in, BRIGADE METROPOLIS';
West by : Apartment No.B-1304 in Thirteenth Floor in 'BRIXTON' Block in 'BRIGADE METROPOLTS';
North by : Apartment No.B-1308 in Thirteenth Floor in 'BRIXTON' Block in 'BRIGADE METROPOLIS';
South by : Apartment No.B-1302 in Thirteenth Floor in 'BRIXTON' Block in 'BRIGADE METROPOLIS'.

affirms that:

1) Original Agreement to Sell dated 28.03.2007
2) Construction Agreement both dated 28.03.2007,
3) Supplementary Agreement dated 16.11.2009
4) Original Sale Deed dated 20.11.2009, executed by Mr.N A Haris and Others, registered as Document No.3079/2009-10, of Book-I,;

have been lost/misplaced and have not been mortgaged/pledged as collateral security and is not in a position to trace the said original documents and Mr.Shivakumar Sundaram in this regards has also lodged a Complaint on 22.04.20024, bearing E-Lost Report No.1023714/2024, before the Bangalore City Police about the aforesaid loss.

Any person/s in possession of the aforesaid document may return the same to us or anyone having any sort of claim over the said Property may lodge their objections in writing within **8 days** from this day to the undersigned.

K. V. Narendra & Associates,
Advocates,
No.557, 2nd Floor, 9th A Main,
Indiranagar, Bangalore-560038.
Ph: 9591067392, 8123209808,

JHARKHAND BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
(CIN – U40108JH2013-SGC001702)
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https://www.jbvnl.co.in, Email- cecr2018@gmail.com

3rd Time Tender Extension Notice

NIT No. – 573/PR/JBVNL/2023-24

e-tender invited for **"selection of consultancy firm (RE Expert) to support JBVNL for implementation of the various Renewable Energy (RE) schemes."** is hereby extended as per the schedule given below: -

1.	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids (online)	18.06.2024 upto 18:00 Hrs
2.	Last Date / Time for receipt of offline documents (if any) in office of GM (Coml.)	19.06.2024 upto 12:30 Hrs
3.	Date and Time for Opening of Technical bid	20.06.2024 at 17:30 Hrs

The tender documents with detailed conditions can be obtained through web site http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in and should upload all relevant documents as mentioned in the tender document only through online e-tender portal/website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

In case of any query, kindly contact on mobile No. GM (Coml)- 9431709163 / Sr. Manager (PP)-9801063475.

स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकयतों को टॉल फ्री नं० 1800 345 6570 पर दर्ज करायें।

PR No. 322771

Sd/-
General Manager (Coml.)

PR 325142 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd(24-25).D

An altered protein and fussy neurons conspire to cause microcephaly

The SASS6 gene and its variants have been implicated in a developmental process that leads to microcephaly. A new study has found that if one copy of this gene is non-functional, the other retains some function. So if both copies are non-functional, a human embryo dies before it becomes a foetus

D.P. Kasbekar

Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby's head is much smaller than normal. Most children with microcephaly also have a small brain, poor motor function, poor speech, and abnormal facial features, and are intellectually disabled.

Researchers believe the roots of the condition lie in the peak phase of brain development in the embryo – when the cells that eventually become neurons fail to divide normally. Clinicians can diagnose microcephaly before the baby is born using foetal ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging.

The SASS6 gene

In particular, since 2014, a gene called *SASS6* and its variants have been implicated in this developmental process. On March 19, researchers at the Affiliated Maternity and Child Health Care Hospital of Nantong University, China, presented "the genetic findings of members of a nonconsanguineous Chinese couple with a history of microcephaly and foetal growth restriction during their first pregnancy".

The team's findings reinforced the *SASS6* gene's role in causing microcephaly. But more importantly, the team also found that if one copy of the *SASS6* gene was non-functional, the other retained at least some function. The implication was that if both copies are non-functional, the human embryo dies before it becomes a foetus.

"[Our] findings confirm the pivotal role of *SASS6* in microcephaly pathogenesis and reveal an expanded view of the phenotype and mutation spectrum associated with this gene," the researchers wrote in their paper, published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*.

Similarly, in a February 2024 study, researchers at the University of Cologne, Germany, reported that they modified mouse embryo-derived cells to remove all functional *SASS6* genes. These genes contain instructions for cells to make structures called centrioles. But even after the genes were removed, the cells were able to make passable, if also abnormal, centrioles.

The problem arose when the cells were nudged to develop into neurons: at this point, all the centrioles made without using the gene's recipe disappeared, and the cells couldn't differentiate into neurons.

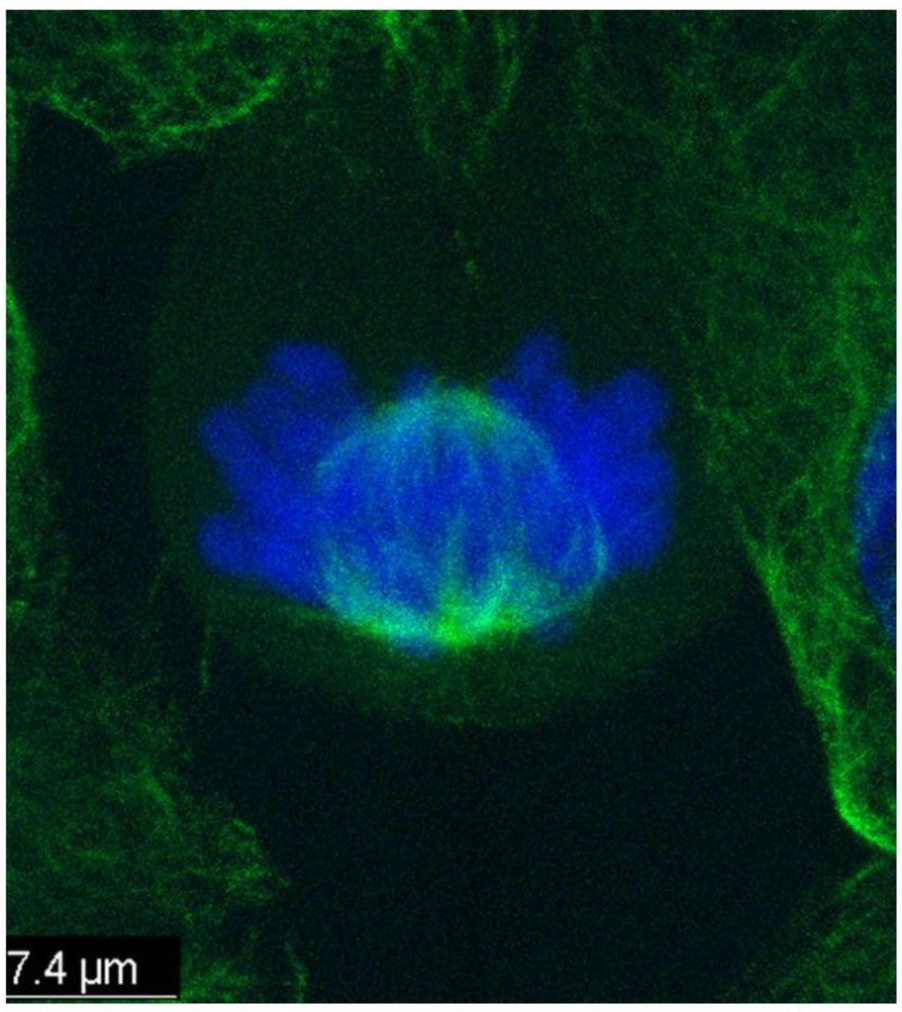
Consanguinity and genetic risk

According to Ashwin Dalal, a paediatrician turned medical geneticist at the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad, 70% or more of cases of congenital microcephaly seen in the clinic come from consanguineous marriages. These are marriages between closely related individuals, such as between uncle and niece or between first cousins.

Consanguinity increases the risk of an individual inheriting a mutated copy of a gene from both parents. The risk is greater if the mutated gene is rarer in the general population.

Microcephaly is caused by mutations in 30 genes. Cells use 10 of these genes to encode proteins that are required to assemble the centrioles and for their subsequent function. When a cell divides, its centrioles help form another structure called the spindle.

During cell division, the old and new cells need to take a series of careful steps. The spindle is like the handrail along this staircase, helping the cells form and maintain their structure. For example, once the old cell makes two copies of its chromosomes, each copy sticks to the centre of the spindle, which is an elongated structure. From there, the spindle moves each copy to its two ends. Each of these ends then becomes the nucleus of a new cell.



An image of chromosomes (blue) attached to a spindle (green) in a dividing cell. SHWETA TYAGI AND AVISHEK KATARIA/CDFD

> Most children with microcephaly have a small brain, poor motor function, poor speech, and abnormal facial features, and are intellectually disabled

If a cell creates centriole proteins from mutated genes, however, cell division is affected as well.

The Ile62Thr mutation

In 2004, researchers discovered the *SASS6* gene in the roundworm *Caenorhabditis elegans*. They also found that the protein that cells made using this gene was conserved across animals, meaning natural selection allowed this protein to exist in all members of the animal kingdom.

When the researchers suppressed the *SASS6* gene in *C. elegans* embryos, they found that the cells failed to assemble new centrioles, resulting in arrested development.

In 2014, other researchers studied a consanguineous Pakistani family of which four members had microcephaly. All the affected individuals were found to carry a mutated version of the human *SASS6* gene on both their copies of chromosome 1: one inherited from the father and the other from the mother.

The *SASS6* gene encodes a protein that has 657 amino acids. This protein assembles new centrioles during the cell division process. In the study of the Pakistani family, the researchers were able to describe the mutation correlated with microcephaly: the amino acid isoleucine at position 62 had been replaced by threonine. Thus its name: Ile62Thr.

Last year, researchers at the University of Tulsa, in the U.S., introduced the Ile62Thr mutation into the *C. elegans SASS6* gene. Their experiment, reported in the journal *Genetics*, revealed that this change didn't detectably impair centriole assembly and function in *C. elegans*. But when the worm's genome had another mutation that affected a different centriolar protein, the Ile62Thr mutation significantly increased centriole replication failure and embryo death.

Evidently, a protein made using a *SASS6* gene with the Ile62Thr mutation is functional *enough* to allow individuals with other unaffected organs to be born and grow into adulthood. In *C. elegans*, it becomes deadlier when the second mutation is also present.

At the same time, humans with just the Ile62Thr mutation don't escape unscathed: the mutation's mild impairment of centriole function still dysregulates cell division enough to cause microcephaly.

Scientists conducted three studies since then, including the March study, and found six more *SASS6* gene variants.

Neurons are finicky

As the February 2024 paper indicated, different cell types have different tolerances to a range of deficits in centriole composition and function.

In particular, the cells fated to become neurons are finicky and have the least tolerance for imperfect centrioles.

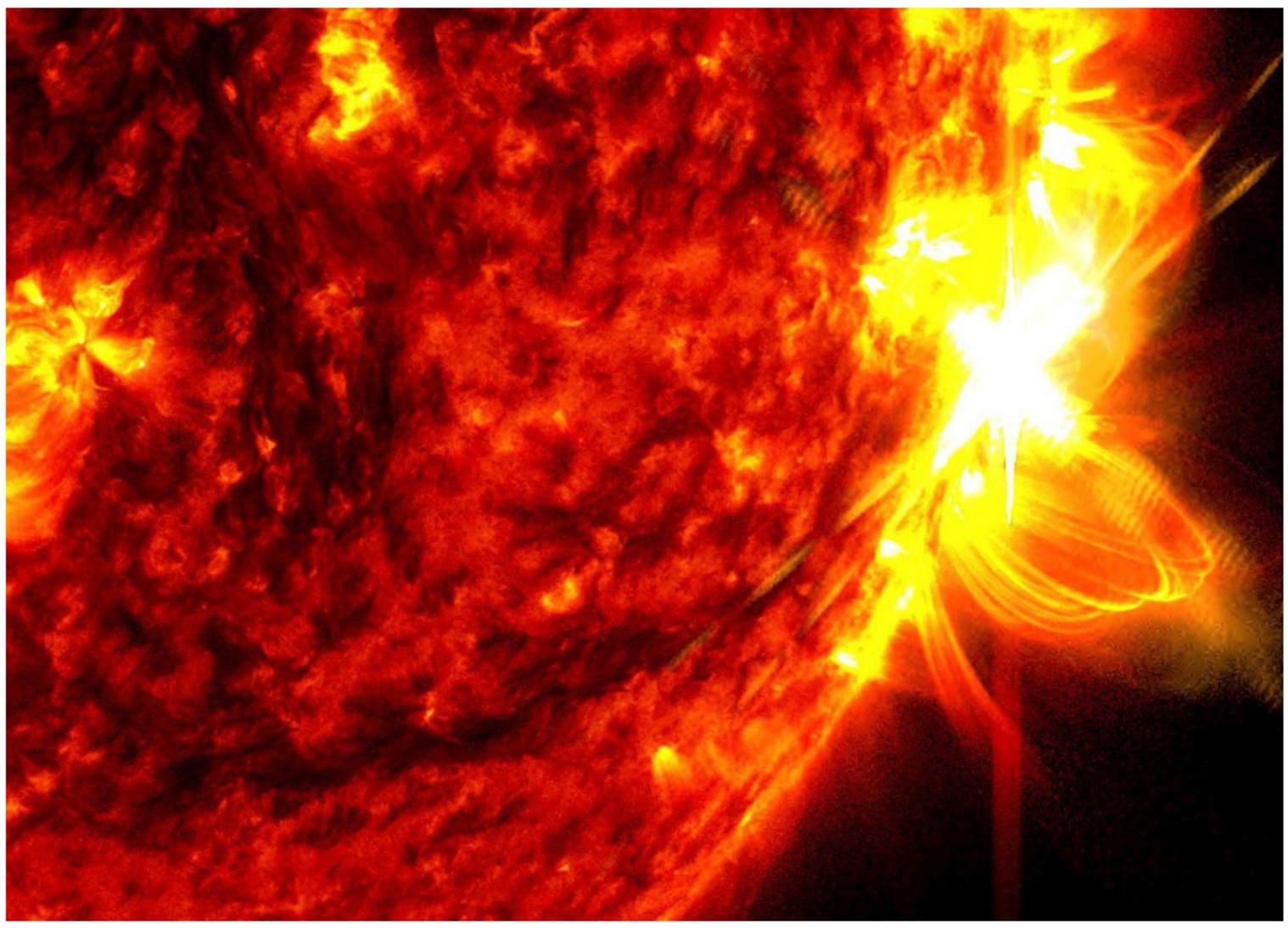
This is why, while an individual with a slightly defective *SASS6* gene can survive to birth and adulthood, he/she also suffers serious brain and head deficits and intellectual disability.

(D.P. Kasbekar is a retired scientist)

THE GIST

- Most cases of congenital microcephaly come from consanguineous marriages. Consanguinity increases the risk of inheriting a mutated copy of a gene from both parents. The risk is greater if the mutated gene is rarer in the general population
- When researchers suppressed the *SASS6* gene in *C. elegans* embryos, they found that the cells failed to assemble new centrioles, resulting in arrested development
- After studying a family of which four members had microcephaly, researchers found the mutation correlated with microcephaly. The amino acid isoleucine in the *SASS6* gene had been replaced by threonine. Thus it is named Ile62Thr

BIG SHOT



This image provided by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory shows a solar flare, right, on May 14, captured in the extreme ultraviolet light portion of the spectrum colorised in red and yellow. An international team of mathematicians and scientists reported on May 22 that the Sun's magnetic field originates much closer to the surface than previously thought. NASA/AP

QUESTION CORNER

Gravity: shaping celestial bodies

Karthik Vinod

Q: Why are planets formed in a spherical shape?
- Hemant Sardesai

A: The short answer is gravity. This 'force', by virtue of the large masses of planets and stars, forces them into a spherical shape.

Part of the answer is also geometry: a sphere is the most compact three-dimensional shape. To be more accurate, for a given volume, a sphere is the shape with the lowest surface area.

If stars and planets had any other shape, gravity would force them to become spherical. Bodies that are less massive also experience less of a 'force' due to gravity and thus will be less compelled to enter into a spherical shape. The electromagnetic forces between the atoms in these bodies will be able to better resist gravity's attempts to sculpt it.
This is why comets, most asteroids, and even us humans aren't spherical.

But let's get even more accurate: nothing in the universe is truly spherical. Stars and planets are actually oblate spheroids. Since they both rotate around a central axis, they create a centrifugal force that pushes mass outwards. So the oblate spheroid shape is a sphere that appears to bulge at the equator.

An artist's illustration of a protoplanetary disc around a star. Planets form when gravity causes parts of the disc to clump together and coalesce. NASA

As a result, gravity is weakest at the equator and strongest at the poles. This is why, on the earth, objects fall to the ground down a teeny-tiny bit faster at the poles than at the equator.

(Karthik Vinod is interning with The Hindu*)*

Have science questions The Hindu can answer? Please send them to science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Question Corner'

Proposal to install firefighting systems in 13 district hospitals hit due to lack of adequate funds

In the Budget, the govt. allocated only ₹6 cr. for firefighting measures against the required ₹78 cr.

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

While district hospitals in new buildings have firefighting systems, several others in old buildings lack smoke detectors, hydrants, sprinklers, and other fire safety measures. FILE PHOTO

In the wake of the recent hospital fire in Delhi, where seven newborns were killed, the focus is again on fire safety. Although the State Health Department has been reinforcing the need for compliance with fire-safety measures, official sources said the department's proposal to install firefighting systems in 13 district hospitals is awaiting funds from the State government.

Based on the findings of a fire audit in 2022-23, the department submitted a proposal to the government for funds for firefighting systems in 13 hospitals at a cost of ₹6 crore for each.

However, sources said in this year's Budget, only ₹6 crore was allocated, as against the required ₹78 crore. While district hospitals in new buildings have firefighting systems, several others in old buildings lack smoke detectors, hydrants, sprinklers, and other fire-safety measures.

Safety guidelines

In March this year, following a letter by the Centre to all States on fire-safety guidelines, the Health Department directed healthcare facilities to ensure all fire-safety measures were in place. Health Commissioner Randeep D. had directed all healthcare facilities to ensure safety guidelines are followed as the threat of fire incidents is high during the summer.

In his letter to the Chief Secretaries of all States, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra requested them to direct the State Health Departments and the State Disaster Management Authorities to work closely to ensure all hospitals conduct fire safety and electrical load audits in addition to fire NOC compliance.

"We had issued detailed instructions on steps to be taken to ensure fire-safety compliance during summer. We will reinforce them and verify them. In the wake of the Delhi fire, an advisory will again be issued to hospitals," Mr. Randeep said.

In March, the Health Dept. told healthcare facilities to ensure all fire-safety measures were in place

Inspection

"All hospitals, including primary health centres, medical college hospitals, as well as private hospitals, should regularly inspect firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, hydrants, and alarms," he said. Hospitals should establish a maintenance schedule for all fire-safety equipment and conduct electrical audits biannually to evaluate the hospital's power consumption, particularly in high-demand areas like ICUs. Besides, in areas with oxygen tanks or piped oxygen, strict no-smoking policies and controls on heat sources should be implemented. Signage should clearly mark these areas, and staff should be trained on the risks associated with high-oxygen environments, he added.

Christ enters into a tie-up with CSDS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Department of International Studies, Political Science and History at Christ (Deemed to be University), Bannerghatta road Campus in Bengaluru, has entered into an academic collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi, which is a pioneer research institute that deals with election survey in India.

The B.A., Political Science programme offers election study as one of the important areas of study, where CSDS will teach the students regarding election survey.

Man drowns in swimming pool

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 21-year-old man drowned in a swimming pool in Yelahanka New Town on Sunday.

The deceased Prajwal M.N., a private firm employee, went to Anjanadri swimming pool on Sunday morning to enquire about swimming classes. He ventured into the pool and drowned. The staff rushed him to a hospital, where he was declared dead.

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Application can be downloaded from the college website www.rgmcet.edu.in and filled in application with the proof of educational qualifications can be sent to the **mail ID: hr@rgmcet.edu.in** on or before **10.06.2024**
CHAIRMAN

OVERSEAS

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Emergency Physician	1	8000	MBBS, Post graduate training in Emergency Medicine 3-5 years post degree experience
Hospital Quality Manager	1	2000	First degree with three years post-degree experience working in a healthcare quality position
Midwives	4	1400	BSc/Diploma in Nursing with at least 2 years of post-degree midwifery experience experience
Cleaners	6	1000	High school education and must be able to speak English

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Sl. No.	Position	UR	OBC	SC	ST	EWS	PwBD	Total	Qualification
01	Middle Specialist	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	Degree in Engg. (Mechanical / Electrical / Electronics)
02	Junior Specialist	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	

The detailed advertisement regard to Age, Qualification, Experience, Mode of applying, Selection procedure etc. are available at HAL Website **www.hal-india.co.in.** The last date for receipt of online application is **10.06.2024**. Corrigendum/ Addendum, if any will be hosted on HAL website only.
Dy. General Manager (HR)
HAL, Helicopter Division

HINDUSTAN AERONAUTICS LIMITED
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Sl. No.	Name of Post	Total No. of Posts
01	CMM (Level-5) Engineer	04
02	Middle Specialist	06
03	Junior Specialist	06

Detailed Advertisement is available on the HAL Website **www.hal-india.co.in.** Interested candidates may visit HAL website for further details. Eligible candidates may submit their duly filled application online in the prescribed format, as per the instructions given in the detailed Advertisement. The Last date for submission of online Application is **07.06.2024.** Corrigendum / Addendum, if any, will be hosted on the HAL Website only.

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2 - 6 years mandatory working experience in handling US General Ledger/ US GAAP. Preference will be given to those who have worked on US property accounting in real estate.

Flexibility in working with night shift is mandatory

Date: **1st June, 2024** (Saturday)
Time: **10 am to 5 pm (Enrolment ends at 5 PM)**
Venue: **Ramada Plaza**, 36, Sardar Patel Rd, Gandhi Nagar, Guindy, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600032.

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Global turnover of tech firms under the ambit of the new bill

30 In $ billion. India's 'Digital Competition Bill' is on the lines of EU's Digital Markets Act 2022. It will apply to firms whose digital services have at least 10 million users locally, bringing some of the world's biggest tech firms under its ambit. REUTERS

Countries that have recognised Palestinian statehood in the UN

140 Spain, Ireland and Norway are moving to formally recognise a Palestinian state, a step toward a long-held Palestinian aspiration that was fuelled by outrage over civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip following Israel's offensive. AP

The people who died due to heatstroke in Rajasthan

6 Phalodi in Rajasthan recorded a maximum temperature of 49.4 degrees Celsius on May 27, the India Meteorological Department reported. There is a possibility of surface winds of 25-35 kmph in various parts of the State in the next 48 hours. PTI

The people killed in India and Bangladesh due to Remal cyclone

38 The toll includes 12 workers who died when a quarry collapsed in Mizoram, which the government attributed to torrential rains as the storm progressed inland. Cyclone Remal made landfall in India and Bangladesh on Sunday evening. AFP

The seats reserved by Delhi University for single girl child

1 Starting August 1, Delhi University will allocate this seat under a supernumerary quota in all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, marking the first time such a policy has been implemented. ANI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On fire safety regulations in India

What happened at the Rajkot gaming centre and at the New Born Baby Care Hospital in New Delhi? What are the various laws and guidelines which stipulate rules around fire safety in buildings? How have courts responded to negligence over public safety?

EXPLAINER

G. Ananthakrishnan

The story so far:

A deadly fire at a gaming centre in Rajkot, Gujarat on May 25 killed at least 32 people, bringing focus back on the safety of public buildings and venues. The TRP Game Zone carnage unfolded in the evening, as fire spread inside the structure built with a metal frame and sheets, trapping the victims including several children. Two inquiries have been set up to go into the disaster, one a Special Investigation Team (SIT) by the State government and another by the Rajkot police. The Gujarat High Court *suo motu* took up the incident and made critical observations on the functioning of the State administration, following which the Police Commissioner, Raju Bhargava, Additional Commissioner Vidhi Choudhary, and Municipal Commissioner Anand Patel were transferred. Rajkot municipal officials including town planning officers responsible for the prevention of illegal constructions were suspended, and four people including the operator of the game zone, Dhaval Thakkar, were arrested.

What was the other incident?

On May 25, seven babies died in a fire in a hospital for newborns in Vivek Vihar, Delhi, leading to the arrest of Naveen Khichi, owner of the New Born Baby Care Hospital, along with the doctor on duty. Preliminary reports suggested that a large number of oxygen cylinders stored in the facility aggravated the impact of the blaze. In both incidents, the focus is on fire certification by the authorities, issue of No Objection Certificates (NOC), and the failure of authorities to take cognisance of illegalities that were happening in full public view.

What fire regulations govern safety?

The Union of India's position on fire safety is that the Model Building Bye-Laws, 2016 and its component Chapter 11 on "Fire Protection and Fire Safety Requirements" provides the necessary framework for State governments, which bear responsibility for fire safety under law. Ensuring adherence to fire safety norms and standards laid down in Part 4 of the National Building Code (NBC) and incorporating mandatory provisions in the process is left to the States.

A structure such as the Rajkot game zone would fall under assembly buildings of the bye-laws, since it is a venue without permanent seating arrangements where 300 or more persons would gather. The definition of assembly buildings is broad under the regulations. They include any building or part of a building where "not less than 50 gather for amusement, recreation, social, religious, patriotic, civil, travel and similar purposes, for example, theatres, motion picture houses, assembly halls, museums, skating, rinks, gymnasiums, restaurants, places of worship, dance halls, club rooms, passenger stations and terminals of air, surface and marine public transportation services, recreation piers and stadia." Hospitals, custodial and penal or mental health institutions are institutional buildings, while educational, business, industry and specialised uses are covered separately.

During the pandemic, amidst a spate of fires, the Health Ministry circulated guidelines on September 28, 2020, stipulating third party accreditation for fire safety and putting a fire response plan in place. Chapter 11 of the Bye-Laws clearly lays down fire safety and infrastructure requirements for buildings which are 49 feet in height or more, and those with low occupancies in various categories, for issue of NOC.

In addition, Gujarat's Comprehensive Development Control Regulations 2017 also make it mandatory to get the Chief Fire Officer's opinion even for a temporary structure. The same regulations stipulate that all structures for whatever use must meet fire prevention and safety provisions specified by the Fire Authority, in terms of the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Measures Act, 2013. In the case of the Rajkot game zone, it was built apparently as a non-standard structure to evade regulatory requirements, and the inquiry would reveal whether it was qualified to be used as an assembly building offering leisure and entertainment services.

How have the courts viewed neglect of fire safety?

Among the most high-profile deadly fire accidents that have led to the loss of life, the Uphaar cinema tragedy of 1997 in Delhi resulted in the conviction of the owners of the venue, Sushil Ansal and Gopal Ansal among others for negligence and tampering of evidence. The death of 59 people who were trapped in the balcony of the hall because of illegally installed seats and a blocked exit resulted in a protracted legal battle, with the families of the victims forming an association to seek justice. The Uphaar case was prosecuted with the charge of causing death by negligence (IPC 304A), hurt or grievous hurt by rash or negligent act (337, 338) by the owners of the cinema, and culpable homicide (304) and other sections in the case of theatre staff and public agency employees, such as the electricity authority. A transformer of the electricity authority that was placed without sanction and allowed without safeguards was thought to have triggered the inferno. The owners had to directly bear responsibility for the wilful structural deviations.

Essentially, the court held the owners of the property, employees and staff from the electricity agency liable for the devastating toll in the Uphaar tragedy for violating the law and later for payment of compensation. On June 13 last year, the anniversary of the blaze, the Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy blamed the judiciary for allowing the Ansal brothers to walk out of jail on a reduced sentence.

In the wake of the Rajkot fire, the Gujarat High Court taking *suo motu* cognisance has led to scrutiny of the enforcement of fire and building laws on the one hand, and the identification of several unauthorised venues in the State hosting leisure and entertainment services. The court was told by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation that a recent law, the Gujarat Regularisation of Unauthorised Development Act, 2022 (in force since Jan 2, 2023) was used by an unauthorised game zone to apply for regularisation.

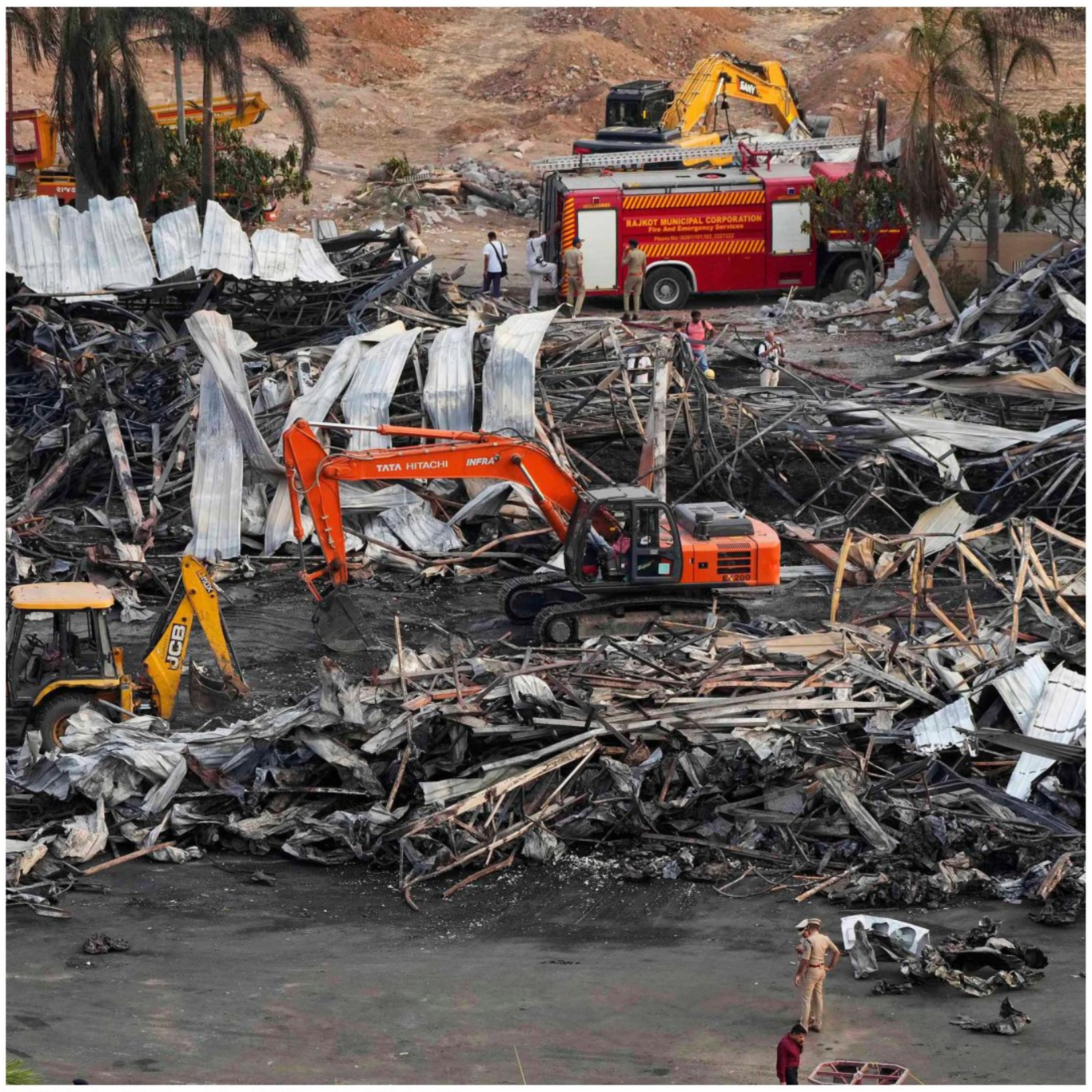
Gujarat has witnessed more than one terrible fire in recent years. The 2019 fire in a tuition centre in Surat's Takshashila Arcade killed over 20 students and led to calls for tightening of fire safety in public buildings. After Rajkot, the Gujarat High Court took note of the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) before it, and noted that "insult [had been] added to injury" because its earlier orders had not been complied with by the State government.

What can be done to get the law enforced?

The *suo motu* notice issued by the Gujarat High Court extends its directions on fire safety and calls for a government report on action to comply with the Comprehensive Development Control Regulations, fire NOCs, periodic checks under the Fire Safety Act and issue of licences under various Acts. Earlier, the State government had informed the court that 163 hospitals and 348 schools in municipality jurisdictions did not have a valid fire NOC. It cited practical difficulties and lack of trained manpower and infrastructure to achieve full compliance.

Given that there were 241 fires in commercial buildings and 42 in government buildings in 2022, killing a total of 257 people (NCRB data), tightening the implementation of the provisions of the building code and the Model Building Bye-Laws is imperative. Full accountability by the State and enforcement agencies is vital. Temporary and ramshackle structures allowed to come up in urban and rural areas, attracting unwary leisure seekers, run the risk of setting off deadly fires. They need to be tightly regulated for safety.

The writer is a Chennai-based journalist.



In ruins: A view of the burned down TRP Game Zone in Rajkot. ANI

THE GIST

On May 25, seven babies died in a fire in a hospital for newborns in Vivek Vihar, Delhi, leading to the arrest of Naveen Khichi, owner of New Born Baby Care Hospital, along with the doctor on duty.

The Union of India's position on fire safety is that the Model Building Bye-Laws, 2016 and its component Chapter 11 on "Fire Protection and Fire Safety Requirements" provides the necessary framework for State governments, which bear responsibility for fire safety under law.

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Council polls: Hectic talks on to choose candidates

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are in Delhi to finalise Congress nominees; Parameshwara says senior leaders need to be consulted before selecting candidates. BJP, JD(S) yet to announce names

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With elections to 11 seats of the Karnataka Legislative Council from the Legislative Assembly constituency around the corner, hectic parleys are under way in the three political parties to select the nominees.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar are in Delhi to finalise Congress candidates for the seven seats that the party is likely to win, amid misgivings by Home Minister G. Parameshwara.

A file photo of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy D.K. Shivakumar.

As the two leaders left for Delhi, Dr. Parameshwara told reporters in Bengaluru that he would expect the party to consult senior and experienced leaders before the candidates are finalised. "They are in responsible positions. It is better to consult seniors. In my opinion, if they decide on their own, it will not be right. Experienced leaders in the party and government should be consulted to understand how the ticket distribution will help the party. These appointments are political and naturally, they should help the party. Senior leaders know who have worked for the party," he said. Among others, former KPCC presidents and those who have held party positions should be consulted, said Dr. Parameshwara, who earlier held the reigns of party president for eight years.

In the 75-member Upper House, the term of 11 seats, including two vacant seats, elected from the Assembly is coming to an end on June 17. The elections to three graduates' and three teachers' constituencies, whose tenure is ending on June 21, are scheduled for June 3 and the election for the 11 seats from the Assembly constituency will be held on June 13.

Of the nine seats, the BJP and the Congress are holding four each while the Janata Dal (Secular) has one. While the BJP's State core committee has recommended names for the three seats it is likely to win, the central leadership is yet to pick the party's nominees. BJP sources did not rule out the possibility of changing the list. The Janata Dal (Secular), which is likely to retain its seat, is yet to finalise the name as incumbent B.M. Farooq, the former Rajya Sabha member Kupendra Reddy, and Assembly election defeated candidate from Yeshwantpur Javarayi Gowda are said to be aspirants for the seat.

'300 aspirants'

Meanwhile, before leaving for Delhi, Mr. Shivakumar told presspersons that there were 300 aspirants for the Legislative Council elections and that the high command would decide the selection criteria. He said it was not possible to accommodate every section of society since aspirants are there from all sections. "There is a demand to provide opportunity to people from coastal Karnataka, Kittur Karnataka, Kalyana Karnataka, and Old Mysore regions. There are people who have worked at block, district, and State levels for the party. There are incumbent members too. That is why it has become tough. Let us see what decision the high command takes." On Dr. Parameshwara's statement that the decision should not be made by the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, and that seniors should be consulted, the KPCC president said, "We will definitely take his opinion."

Congress sources said the list of candidates was likely to be finalised in consultation with party president M. Mallikarjun Kharge, and that there was a long list of aspirants, who include former Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, MPs, and senior party functionaries. On Tuesday, Congress leaders from Kolar met the KPCC president to push the case of the former Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar. Sources said prominent aspirants include Yathindra Siddaramaiah, B.L. Shankar, V.R. Sudarshan, Rani Satish, Karadi Sanganna, and S.R. Patil besides Minister N.S. Bose Raju and Chief Minister's Political Secretary K. Govindaraju who are among the four current members of the Congress in the Upper House.

Increase in price of seeds: HDK slams govt.; CM blames it on drought

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The increased price of seeds ahead of the kharif season in the State has come under scrutiny as the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy blamed the five guarantees for the nearly 50% increase while Chief Minister Siddaramaiah cited drought as the reason.

"This is the work of the State government that is taking pride. On one hand, the government is giving guarantees and on the other, it is indulging in extortion. This is pickpocketing. The result of the increased price of subsidised sowing seeds available in the Agriculture Department has doubled the price of seeds in the open market. The government should immediately intervene to bring down the price of seeds," Mr. Kumaraswamy said on social media platform X.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the price of seeds of some crops such as soya had come down while that of seeds of crops such as sunflower has remained the same. FILE PHOTO

In his response, Mr. Siddaramaiah blamed the drought in 2023-2024 for the increased price of seeds as that has reduced production considerably, resulting in the increased cost of purchase of seeds from growers. "This has increased the price of seeds. This is true in all States that go for kharif sowing. The difference in seed rates this year compared to 2023 is 48.56%. However, compared to the price of seeds in other States, the price in Karnataka is still cheaper," he said in a release on Tuesday.

Procurement cost

The Chief Minister also said that the price of seeds of some crops such as soya had come down while that of seeds such as sunflower had remained the same. He pointed out that the selling price of seeds was also determined by the procurement cost of agricultural produce by the APMC. "When compared to 2022-2023, the variation in procurement cost in 2023-2024 is 59.58%. The increased procurement cost of seeds has benefited farmers who produce seeds on their farm and sell it."

'No shortage'

Agriculture Minister N. Cheluvarayaswamy said that despite the drought in 2023-2024 that resulted in crop loss on 46 lakh hectares, the government has ensured that there is no shortage of seeds.

"The sale process for seeds has not been introduced by our government. The price of seeds is dependent on quality control, processing, laboratory tests, grading, warehouse, transport, and seed certification, among others. We have followed the same procedures that the earlier governments have followed," the Minister said.

Prajwal video leak: SIT arrests two who had come to HC to seek anticipatory bail

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Officials of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Tuesday arrested two people allegedly involved in leaking videos of Prajwal Revanna, Hassan MP, from the High Court premises when they had come to seek anticipatory bail.

The duo, Naveen Gowda and Chethan from Hassan, was on the run after the SIT took over the case, and had even applied for anticipatory bail at a sessions court, which was rejected.

They had come to the High Court to move an anticipatory bail petition, when, based on a tip-off, an SIT team caught them.

SIT officials arrested Likhith Gowda, Chethan, and advocate Devraje Gowda on May 12 for allegedly circulating obscene content. The accused are reportedly BJP workers and close associates of the former Hassan MLA and BJP State general secretary Preetham Gowda. Their arrests were made following a complaint by Poornachandra Tejaswi, advocate and JD(S) worker from Hassan, based on which an FIR was registered at the Hassan CEN police station on April 23.

Bonds signed for compulsory rural service by MBBS graduates prior to July 2022 are illegal: High Court

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Around 440 MBBS graduates of 2021 are not required to undergo one year of compulsory rural service as per the bond signed by them while joining the medical course through government-quota seats in 2015 as the High Court of Karnataka has said the law, enacted in 2012 for mandatory rural service, remained unenforced for 10 years as it was published in the official gazette only in

July 2022. "The State appears to have been in deep slumber or having a siesta for 10 years. If the rule itself depicts that it would come into effect on the date of its publication in the official gazette, the rule that just stood on paper before publication was inchoate. On an inchoate rule, the State has sought to impose certain conditions upon students," the court observed.

The court made it clear that bonds executed for mandatory rural service till the rules were published in the official gazette on July 22, 2022 are illegal as the contracts, signed through the bonds, were executed based on the power available under the rules, which were not in force when the bonds were executed prior to July 22, 2022.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order recently while partly allowing the petitions filed in 2021 by Sharanya Mohan and other MBBS graduates, who completed the course in 2021. The petitioners had questioned the legality of compulsory rural service when the National Medical Commission (NMC), which controls medical courses, has not made such a service mandatory.

'Can't escape now'

However, the court said the rules are in place today with their publication in the gazette in July 2022 and the students admitted to the MBBS course under government quota seats cannot now escape the rigour of compulsory rural service or execution of bonds in terms of the rules.

The court said the Karnataka Compulsory Service Training by Candidates Completed Medical Courses Act and the Rules, 2012, the validity of which was upheld by the court in 2020, is valid even after the enactment of the National Medical Commission Act as the 2012 Act is not repugnant to the NMC Act when the latter did not restrict the powers of the State to regulate education as per the constitutional provisions.

Textbooks, uniforms will be distributed on time, says Minister

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Textbooks and uniforms will be distributed to students of government schools on time this year, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Madhu Bangarappa has said.

Addressing a press conference in Mysuru on Tuesday as part of a campaign for Congress candidate Marithibbe Gowda, who is contesting the elections to the Legislative Council from the South Teachers' constituency, Mr. Bangarappa said the textbooks and uniforms were ready and would be distributed among students over the next month. The textbooks would reach the students in the first few days of the academic year during which they would be taught topics such as general knowledge and other subjects.

To a question, he said the textbooks had already been revised last year and there would be no changes this year except for grammar and other minor corrections. He added that action would be taken if the uniforms were found to be of sub-standard quality.

With regard to shoes, the Minister said the School Development Monitoring Committees had been entrusted with the responsibility of distribution of shoes, but the government would pay for them.

He said the State government had not taken any decision on reintroduction of the scheme to distribute free bicycles to students of Class 8 in government and aided high schools.

Mr. Bangarappa said the Congress government had appointed a total of 12,000 teachers in government schools since this January.

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE OFFICER, CHIKBALLAPURA DISTRICT.
E-mail iD: dhochikballapur@gmail.com /dhochikkaballapur-hfws@karnataka.gov.in
Ph.No:08156-277099 / 277034
No: DHO/CBP/OS-TENDER/04/2023-24 Date: 22.05.2024

-:E-Tender Notification:-

Sub: Regarding recruitment of Junior Laboratory Technician, Pharmacist, DataEntry Operator, Driver and Group 'D' posts required for Health Institutions in Chikkaballapur district and Nurses and Group 'D' employees for Health Extension Centers on outsourcing basis.

Reference: (1) GOVERNMENT ORDER NO: HFW 289 HSM 2014 (Part-3) BANGALORE, DATED: 08.08.2016. **(2)** Govt Order No: HFW 260 HSM 2016 Bangalore, Dated: 26.10.2016. **(3)** Director, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore letter No: SRC/96/2016-17, dated: 25.01.2017. **(4)** Chief Administrative Officer, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore letter No: SRC/135/2016-17, dated: 03.06.2017. **(5)** Government Order No: 78 CGE 2017, Bangalore Dated: 01.01.2018. **(6)** Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore Circular No: HSP(1)/78/2017-18, dated: 08.01.2018. **(7)** Chief Administrative Officer, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore Letter No: SRC/08/2017-18 (Part) Dated: 06.09.2019. **(8)** Circular No. of the Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore: Mulepa(A0/AD/HO.Lessha-Group D/56/2019-20, Dated: 31.12.2019. **(9)** Circular No. of the Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore: Mulepa(A0/AD/Group D-Nibandane/61/2019-20, dated: 13.01.2020. **(10)** This Office Order No.: G.A.C./Ho.No.Tender/03/2020-21, Dated: 28.02.2022. **(11)** Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore vide letter No: SRC/08/2017-18(Part), dated: 20.12.2022. **(12)** This Office Order No: G.Aukka/Chipura/Ho.No.-Tender/01/2022-23, Dated: 16.05.2023. **(13)** Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare Services, Bangalore vide letter No: SRC/08/2017-18(Part) E-1228383, dated: 17.02.2024. **(14)** GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR NO:CSUE 06 SENIOR 2024 DATED: 20.05.2024. **(15)** As approved by Hon'ble Collector, Chikkaballapur District vide:15. As per reference regarding the matter and approval of reference (15) for the year 2024-25, Health Institutions in Chikkaballapur district require Junior Laboratory Technician, Pharmacist, Data Entry Operator, Driver and Group 'D' posts and Health Extension Centers for the services of Nurses and Group 'D' staff. An e-tender notification has been issued for outsourcing. The details are as follows.
Details: (1) Date of publication of tender: **22.05.2024. (2)** EMD Amount: **Rs. 12,70,000. (3)** Tender Commencement Date **(Web Details) 22.05.2024. (4)** Last date for submission of filled tender forms: 21.06.2024, A/N 03.00 PM. **(5)** Date of Pre-Bid Meeting: 11.06.2024, A/N 03.00 PM. **(6)** Date of Opening of Tender Technical Bid: 24.06.2024, A/N 03.00 PM. **(7)** Date and time of financial bid opening if possible: 25.06.2024, A/N 03.00 PM. More details can be obtained by contacting the office of the District Health and Family Welfare Officer at **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** and during office hours.

Sd/- District Health and Family Welfare Office, Chikkaballapur
DIPR/CHIKKABALLAPUR/RO:8/KSMCA/2024-25

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that my client intends to purchase the property described in the schedule hereunder from its present owners **Mr.Mohammed Imtiaz A Hameed and Mr.Mohammed Soyeb A Hameed,** both sons of late Abdul Hameed Sait both residing at Flat No.302, Splendor Apartments No.9/1, Lloyds Road, Cooke Town, Bengaluru – 560084 they having acquired title to the same under a Sale Deed dated 07.10.2016 registered as Document No.HLS-1-03006/2016-17 of Book I, stored in CD No.HLSD137 in the office of the Senior Sub-Registrar, Halasuru, Bengaluru.

All persons having or claiming any right, title, estate or interest by way of inheritance, share, sale, mortgage, transfer, lease, tenancy, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, devise, bequest, exchange, pre-emption, possession or encumbrance or otherwise howsoever into or upon the Schedule Property herein below described are called upon to intimate the same in writing to the undersigned at the below given address along with all the documents relating to such claim within **15 days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which any such claim of any party shall be deemed to have been waived for all legal practical purposes and shall not be entertained hereafter and I shall opine that the Schedule Property is free of any claims and my client will be free to proceed with the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of land bearing **Municipal Corporation No.39** having **PID No.86-4-39** (earlier bearing Plot No.31, Later Municipal No.4/2, Postal Address No.62) measuring East: 70 feet 3 inches, West: 60 feet 9 inches, North to South :40 feet total measuring **2740 square feet** together with residential building standing thereon comprising of Ground and First Floor situated at 2nd Cross, Hutchins Road, St.Thomas Town, Corporation Ward No.86, Bengaluru and bounded as follows:

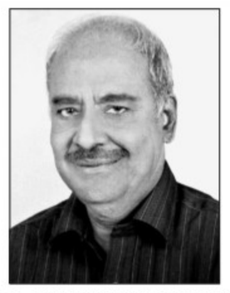
East by : Private Property; (earlier Property No.64, Old No.38, 2nd Cross, Hutchins Road)
West by : Private Property; (earlier Property No.60, Old No.40, 2nd Cross, Hutchins Road
North by : 2nd Cross, Hutchins Road
South by : Private Property; (earlier Sudeep Training Institute)

Tejaswini
Advocate
202, Hubtown Prime, 3/2,
A.M.Road, Halasuru,
Bengaluru – 560 042
Mail id:xv.lawyer@gmail.com
Place : Bengaluru Date : 29.05.2024

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

DOB 31.07.1937 — DOD 28.05.2024



R. SHANMUGHAM
Retd. Dy. General Manager, Indian Oil, Bombay
Managing Director of
Candid Power Systems Pvt Ltd.,
Candid Green Energy Pvt Ltd. &
Candid Energy Systems
Final Rites today 29.5.2024, 1.00 pm at
U-86, 5th Main Road, Annanagar, Chennai-600040.
Cremation around 2.30 pm at New Avadi Road Crematorium.

Deeply mourned by
Gayathri Baskaran (Daughter-in-Law)
B. Nandakumar (Grandson)
Meenakshi Nandakumar (Granddaughter)
Darshan (Great Grandson)
Mob: 98404-80709

DEATH

DOB: 12.04.1930 — DOD: 28.05.2024

With profound grief we inform the demise of
Dr. G. Krishnamurthi
Former Dean, Prof. &
Director of Physiology, MMC
S/o Late S.Guruswamy, Labour Leader
Last rites at our residence on 29.5.24
Cremation at New Avadi Road at 10am.
Deeply Mourned by
Mrs. Vasanthi (Daughter) & family
D52, Annanagar East, Chennai 102
98408-33979 / psvc2018@gmail.com

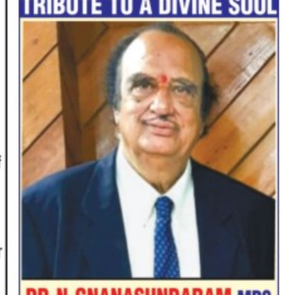
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

First Death Anniversary

Sarala Ravi
DOB:24-01-1962, DOD:29-05-2023
Fondly Remembered by
Husband Dr.V Ravi,
daughters Shruthi and Spoorthi

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

TRIBUTE TO A DIVINE SOUL



DR.N.GNANASUNDARAM MDS
Retd. Principal
TN GOVT DENTAL COLLEGE
12.02.1940 - 29.05.2023
FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Still Guiding and Guarding, Fondly Remembered by Family, Relatives, Teachers, Students and Friends

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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IN THE LIMELIGHT

Smita Patil and Girish Karnad in *Manthan*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

How *Manthan*'s depiction of class, caste and gender hierarchies remains relevant

Restored by the Film Heritage Foundation with 4K technology, Shyam Benegal's 'Manthan' made a splash at the Cannes Film Festival. Ahead of its theatrical re-release, a look at how the landmark film speaks to today's agrarian economy

Anuj Kumar

A fictionalised account of how India's dairy movement took root, *Manthan* combines social drama and commentary to deliberate on the difficult process of deepening democracy. Almost five decades after it made it to theatres, the title reflects the churning of caste and class that is going on in our participatory democratic process even when we have entered the much-publicised 'Amrit Kaal' of our freedom from the colonial yoke.

A product of the times, when parallel cinema was building a bridge between art and commercial movies, director Shyam Benegal refuses to decorate his cinema with false hopes and sermons. He posits an outsider into the stark reality of rural life and through him taps into the spirit, ignorance, and enterprise of village folks.

Like the innovative idea of crowdfunding, Mr. Benegal proposes that social progress and profit can coexist on the same page. On the surface, it is inspired by eminent dairy engineer and social entrepreneur Verghese Kurien's remarkable experiment but a deeper look reveals the fissures of caste, class, and corruption that are still stopping India from becoming one big cooperative society.

The narrative

The film gives the idealism of youth a chance to blossom. Early in the film, when protagonist Dr. Manohar Rao (Girish Karnad) reaches Sanganva village to build a dairy cooperative, the local businessman Ganga Prasad Mishra (Amrish Puri) who buys milk from villagers for his private dairy crosses his path. Mishra takes pride in building the economy of the village.

Rao doesn't contest his claim but adds that it is time to move on to a more equitable system where the arbitrariness of the pricing and the milking of caste and class hierarchies to satiate one person's greed is done away with. This means reducing the role of the middlemen who make the villagers dependent by doling out loans to them in their time of need and then deciding the prices according to their interests. This pernicious cycle of exploitation still exists, albeit in different forms, as we discovered during the farmers agitation. Trains that go through Punjab are getting inordinately delayed because a section of farmers are still protesting.

Manthan sparks this train of thought because economic exploitation marked by systemic challenges continues to haunt the agrarian economy and collective action and advocacy for the empowerment of the underprivileged are seen with suspicion both by the system as well as a section of the community.

Interestingly, as the locals arrive to receive the suited-booted vet who had gotten down from the train, the first sentence we hear is, "Maaf kijiye, gaadi time par aa gayi" (excuse us, the train has arrived on time). Made during the time of Emergency, the film retains its independent voice and makes a sharp comment on the dark period for democracy when it is said that trains had suddenly started running on time. The train sequence segues into a harsher reality where the vet, after alighting from a train, refuses to board an overloaded horse carriage.

Entrepreneurship and caste

Vijay Tendulkar's screenplay and Kaifi Azmi's dialogues tear open the class and caste structures that make the democratic process difficult to realise at the grassroots. Rao's insistence on equality threatens to disrupt the existing power structures in the village. The cooperative is formed but the swaggering Sarpanch (Kulbhushan Kharbanda) still insists that Dalits form a separate line while selling their milk. Rao's educated wife Shanta also has a casteist outlook and shows little interest in her spouse's battle against injustice.

Unpaved roads, lack of basic health facilities and gender hierarchies are seen alongside lopsided development shown through Govind Nihalani's long shots of the farm and huts with thatched roofs, and the familiar village sounds created by Vanraj Bhatia – all of which disrupt stereotypes of village life. Preeti Sagar's 'Mero Gaam Kaatha Parey' kept *Manthan* alive in memory when Hindi cinema had moved on to western shores for inspiration.

The film's heart is on the left but it doesn't give a blank cheque to bookish idealism and keeps questioning the motives and gaze of the urban outsider in the rural milieu. Rao's motives are not only probed by the smarmy Mishra whose milk business is expected to take a hit because of the cooperative but also by Rao's well-meaning friend Deshmukh (Mohan Agashe) who is not as emotionally invested in the task as Rao is.

Tendulkar creates an interesting contrast between the playful city guy played by Anant Nag and the committed urban that Karnad essays with his innate grace and poise in perhaps his most convincing and moving performance. Both develop a soft corner for the village girls, or the honour of the community one could say, but their motives are different.

Bindu played by Smita Patil is a complex character played with irresistible conviction. She seems to be yearning for freedom from the shackles of patriarchy but hasn't developed the confidence and the vocabulary to take the next step. Rao, too, is in two minds. Mr. Benegal has beautifully portrayed the unsaid between the two. Their silences and simplicity haunt us long after the credits roll and question the fundamentals of feminism and fidelity.

Naseeruddin Shah's Bhola represents the anguished Dalit, who has almost lost his voice because of feudal structures and doubts the concerns of the doctor until Rao shows him the possibility of a level playing field through the power of vote.

Eventually, when Bhola addresses his community to say 'soch vichari se vote dalna' (think before you vote), it rings a bell.

The actor who believes in Method once told this journalist that he lived in a hut, learnt to make cow dung cakes, and milk a buffalo. He would carry buckets full of milk and serve the unit members to get the physicality of the character right.

The power of crowdfunding

In 2016, in an interview with this journalist, Mr. Benegal, while underlining that the common Indian has always supported good cinema, said that in *Manthan* the source of funding was much more organised and publicised but it was not the only time he worked with the money of common people to tell their story to a larger audience.

In *Antarnaad* (1991), which was based on the Swadhayay movement or self-reliance, the fishing communities of Maharashtra collected money and approached Mr. Benegal. Before that in *Susman* (1987), handloom cooperatives contributed to bringing Mr. Benegal's vision of the plight of weavers to life. The tragic irony of the weaver later found its way into Prakash Raj's *Kanchivaram* (2007) as well.

Before the Film Heritage Foundation came into the picture with 4K technology, *Manthan* was digitally restored in 2011 by Pixion and Cameo Restoration Sound, and that 'restored version' is available on YouTube.

However, the poor prints of *Susman* and *Antarnaad* are waiting for an Amul to have a new lease of life.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

World Menstrual Hygiene Day is observed every year on May 28. A quiz on the subject

Ramya Kannan

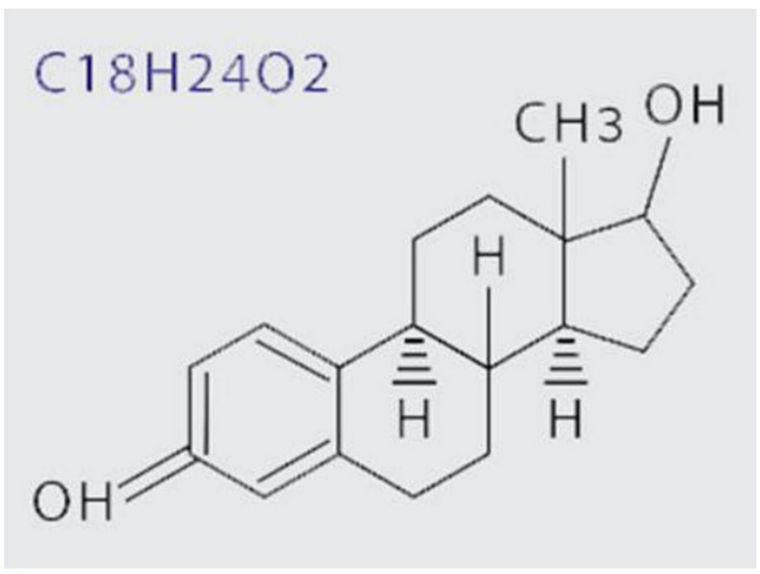
QUESTION 1
Cold, winter weather can exacerbate the painful symptoms women feel during periods. What is the reason?

QUESTION 2
On an average, how much blood does a woman's body lose during a period?

QUESTION 3
The withdrawal of testosterone in adult males can cause nervousness, irritability, lethargy and depression. Often referred to as 'man periods', what is the condition called?

QUESTION 4
What is the word we know that defines and marks the end of a woman's reproductive years?

QUESTION 5
In 1946, a production house that you may quite not associate with the subject made a movie, *The Story of Menstruation*. It was a basic explanation of the purpose and process of menstruation, told largely with illustrations, and naturally, avoiding the subject of sex. Can you guess the name of the production company?



Visual question:
Which hormone is primarily responsible for triggering menstruation? Its chemical formula/structure is illustrated above.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The only player to have won two editions of the World Cup as captain. **Ans: Daren Sammy**
2. The players to have won the Cup as wicket-keeper captains. **Ans: M.S. Dhoni in 2007 and Jos Buttler in 2022**
3. This country was involved in two tied matches in the 2012 edition. **Ans: New Zealand**
4. This country has reached the semi-finals six times. **Ans: Pakistan**
5. The common link between Dirk Nannes, Roelof van der Merwe, David Wiese and Mark Chapman with respect to T20 World Cup history. **Ans: They have played for two different countries**
6. The only bowler from a non-test playing nation to pick up five wickets in an innings. **Ans: Ahsan Malik for The Netherlands**
7. This person has stood as an on-field umpire in the most number of matches. **Ans: Aleem Dar (45 matches)**
Visual: Identify the players and the feat that connects them. **Ans: Rohit Sharma and Shakib Al Hasan are the only players to have played in all eight editions and are in their respective teams for the ninth edition too**
Early Birds: Prashant Nain| Abhay Krishan

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Disinterested, uninterested."

'Disinterested' means 'not influenced by one's own advantage, impartial'.

You can go to him for advice. He looks at every problem objectively. He gives disinterested advice.

'Uninterested' means 'not interested'.

He's selfish. He is uninterested in others.

In American colloquial English, 'disinterested' is used in the sense of 'uninterested'. In Britain, discriminating writers and speakers maintain the distinction between the two words. When a person is interested in something, he shows his 'desire to learn or know something or his involvement in something'.

I am interested in old coins.

I am interested in his welfare.

When you are interested, you show interest in something or somebody. When you say that something is interesting, you mean that something is holding your attention, something is arousing your curiosity. When you say 'I am interesting,' you are paying a compliment to yourself. When you say 'I am interested,' you are showing an interest in something or somebody. There are some who say that they are interesting when they mean that they are interested. Others would say that you are an interesting person if, for example, you are deeply interested in a variety of things."

"Low-down (N. C. Chagla, Bombay)"

" 'Low-down' as an adjective means 'abject, mean, dishonourable.'

He is noted for his low-down tricks.

'Low-down' as a noun means 'relevant information.'

The journalist wanted to get the low-down on the minister's dismissal.

You try to get to the bottom of a thing to find out all about it; you go deep down."

"The present continuous or progressive tense."

"In colloquial English, the progressive is used with 'hope,' 'want,' 'wonder' to express tentativeness, politeness. 'I hope you will come' means that the speaker's expectations are high. 'I am hoping you will come' is polite and less demanding. The tone is rather deferential.

I am wondering if you can come tomorrow.

Are you wanting any assistance, sir? Can I help you?

The progressive of 'go' is used to denote a future action.

I am going to Bombay next week.

She is not going to contest the election.

The present progressive is also used to denote events that are likely to take place in the future.

He is taking me to a movie next week.

I am buying her a present for her birthday next Sunday.

The progressive is also used to denote a change of state taking place over a period.

He is getting old.

Our industries are improving.

The difference between (a) 'He is friendly' and (b) 'He is being friendly' is that (a) says that the person is by nature friendly; (b) suggests that the person appears to be friendly at the time of speaking. It is not his nature to be friendly all the time. He shows a friendly attitude at the moment."

Published in The Hindu on March 3, 1992.

Word of the day

Panoply:
a complete and impressive array

Usage: *He presented us a portrait of the founder of the company in full panoply.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/panoplypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈpænəpli/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Airport rail is a faster, cheaper, roomier alternative to metro

Despite its clear advantages over the metro, the airport stretch of the four-corridor Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) was not prioritised over the other lines

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

A ringside glimpse of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) network across four corridors, with the airport corridor stretch branching out. K-RIDE

Everyone talks about the airport metro, but one look at the pillars and completion seems nowhere in sight. Meanwhile, a faster, cheaper, roomier alternative called the Suburban Rail Airport Corridor is finally getting off the drawing board. This dedicated corridor with its specialised coaches will link the airport to vast stretches of Bengaluru, where the metro connection is still years away.

Despite its clear advantages over the metro, the airport stretch of the four-corridor Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) was not prioritised over the other lines. The implementing agency, the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited (K-Ride), has now shifted gears, proposing a route to the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) from the Doddajala side.

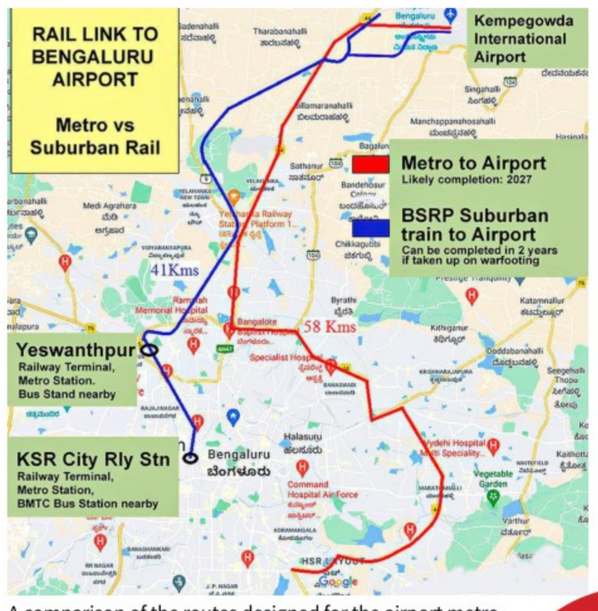
Once approved, the airport corridor will drop the earlier alignment designed to enter KIA at the Trumpet Interchange on Ballari Road. Instead, the tracks will be laid through the Begur Road entry before terminating at the multi-modal mobility hub coming up between the two airport terminals.

Completely different alignments

The new 8km link, branching off the Majestic-Devanahalli corridor at Doddajala, will be longer than the 5.6km connection planned earlier. However, K-Ride reckons that the new route will also benefit employees of the Aerospace Park just outside the airport and residents. Two additional stations are proposed before the track enters the airport premises.

So, why should an airport passenger hop onto the BSRP train instead of the flashy Metro? "The Metro and BSRP have completely different alignments. The only common factor is upto Yelahanka, beyond which the Metro turns towards K.R. Puram at Hebbal and goes to Silk Board taking the Outer Ring Road route. The BSRP train moves to Yeswanthpur, Malleswaram and Majestic, the heart of the city," explains Rajkumar Dugar, a mobility analyst tracking the suburban rail project for years.

The big problem with the Airport Metro is this: It is unlikely to be a dedicated airport line such as the Delhi Airport Express, implying multiple interchange transfers with luggage. "On the other hand, the BSRP train will have excellent integration with the Metro both at Yeshwantpur and Bengaluru City railway stations," he points out.



A comparison of the routes designed for the airport metro and the BSRP Suburban Rail Airport Corridor.

Seamless intermodal transfers

To make commuters' intermodal transfers seamless, the BSRP stations are being positioned closer to the Metro stations at both Yeshwantpur and Majestic. The BSRP line will also be closer to the Subhashnagar BMTC bus terminal in Majestic. An earlier location was within the City Railway Station, close to the platforms but uncomfortably distant from the Metro and BMTC hubs.

Airport Metro commuters do have the option to switch over to the Gottigere-Nagawara line at an interchange along the ORR. But, as seasoned commuter rail campaigner Sanjeev Dyamannavar notes, this will be a Herculean task. "The Metro line from Gottigere, Bannerghatta Road will be underground at this point. There will be a five-level difference with the elevated Airport Metro line. There is also a flyover at Nagawara to deal with. Integration will be in a very bad shape," he says.

Unlike the metro, the interchanges of the four BSRP corridors are mostly at grade, so also the integration with the existing railway stations. This would mean airport commuters could seamlessly alight the train at Yelahanka to catch a connecting BSRP train on the Corridor-4, when it gets operationalised between Heelalige near Electronic City and Rajanakunte.

At Yeshwanthpur, they could also switch from the Airport BSRP train and hop onto Corridor-2, which runs between Baiyappanahalli and Chikkabanavara, passing through Hebbal, Nagavara, Banaswadi and Kasturinagar.

However, from a commuter's perspective, even switching corridors on the BSRP will not be without hassles.

As a Whitefield resident, Pravir says, "A direct BMTC Volvo bus would be preferable to go to the airport, taking the Budigere Cross route. Once fully operationalised, the BSRP route would mean first boarding the train at Whitefield, switching to Corridor-3 at Baiyappanahalli, and again shifting to the Airport Corridor at Yelahanka."

Metro's capacity constraint

Beyond routes, the Metro has a capacity constraint. As Sanjeev notes, the sitting space in BSRP trains would be far higher than that in Metro coaches, where standing passengers far outnumber those lucky enough to find a seat. Every suburban train compartment is expected to have a separate luggage section, with a check-in facility for airport passengers on the Delhi Airport Express lines.

Here's a hypothetical scenario once both the Airport Metro and the BSRP trains are operational. An airport passenger takes the Metro to Jayanagar. Reaching Silk Board after passing through several stations along the Outer Ring Road, he will have to switch to a different line.

In the words of Rajkumar, "This will take over two hours, since the Metro will take 90-100 minutes to reach Silk Board from the Airport terminal. By the BSRP train, the Airport to Majestic commute will take not more than 65-70 minutes.

The average speed of BSRP is slightly higher because the average inter-station gap is more, at 2.5-3km compared to Metro's 1.5-2km."

If BSRP is seen as a viable airport connectivity option, why not extend it to outlying satellite towns? Why not let airport-bound commuters in Bidadi, Ramanagaram, Tumakuru or Hosur take this faster option to KIA? It is learnt that K-Ride had repeatedly made this offer to the South Western Railways (SWR). But a green signal for even a pre-feasibility study has not come through.

In July 2023, the K-Ride Board had given an in-principle go-ahead for the study. It was proposed that under a second phase, BSRP could be extended to satellite towns such as Gauribidanur, Chikkaballapura, Bangarpet, Magadi, Kolar, Hosur, Mysuru and Tumakuru, catering to rising public demand. The objective was made clear: To ease the congestion in Bengaluru City and aid major developments already underway in the satellite towns and future growth. An airport link could have been easily integrated into this larger network.

Whatever the fate of this proposed extension, all eyes are now on the early completion of the BSRP phase 1. Prioritising the airport corridor could be a game-changer.

However, the progress of the entire project has been slow. In June 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had set a 40-month deadline for the ₹15,767-crore project. Barring a few stretches, civil works have not moved.

Nobody talks about the 40-month deadline anymore, says Rajkumar. Parliamentarians from Bengaluru had rarely taken a review of the project to facilitate solutions to problems faced by K-Ride, he points out.

The Shrishti Collective: A two-day exhibition showcasing diverse thesis projects

The exhibition focused on subjects of sustainability, mental health, and smart appliances, through design, research and technical application

Aasaavari Mohana Gobburu
Vibha Rajeev
BENGALURU

Some of the displays from the the exhibition.

The Srishti Collective 2024, a two-day exhibition by the graduating undergraduate and postgraduate batches of 2024, was recently held by the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology (SMI) at its new campus in Yelahanka. The event, which was organised for the first time after the COVID-19 lockdown, showcased 150 diverse thesis projects focusing on subjects of sustainability, mental health, and smart appliances, through design, research and technical application.

Dr. Arindam Das, the Director of SMI, explained that the "interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary" pedagogy allows students of diverse fields to come together, explore their interests and express their creativity through art, technology and design. Drawing on the "4Ps" – Presentation, Preparation, Project and People -- he emphasised that the semester-long process equips the students with skills useful for their "professional future."

With sustainability and ecology being one of the central themes of the exhibition, Pragya Khandelwal, a final-year student from Rajasthan explained that her project focused on sustainable Indian weddings. Coming from a family that has been in the wedding planning business for over 40 years, she was inspired to create this project due to the large amounts of waste she saw generated via decorations, food and transportation. Her focus was on sustainable decorations using reusable materials such as banana leaves, local plants and flowers. Without compromising on cultural values, Pragya's project asks the question "Why can't we make luxury weddings more sustainable?"

Another final-year student Tia Chaubey, focused on ecology and exhibited graphics of exotic birds and pets, highlighting the buying and selling of illegal birds and animals in the markets of Shivajinagar. "A lot of them had reptiles in little drawers", she described. Through her work, Tia Chaubey aims to "sensitise people" about the "confinement and commodification" of animals.

Mental health

Mental health was another theme that was explored through exhibits. One such exhibit was by Vidhi Jain, who looked at postpartum depression, drawing inspiration from mothers, both in her life and from social media. Through her work, she hoped to capture the lived experiences of postpartum depression and the struggle to conform to societal standards of being an "ideal mother". Her work showed baby clothes hanging on a circular stand, with the mother's stories embroidered on it, which represent traditional gender roles of Indian mothers.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1974

ST on Coir Fibre to go in Karnataka

Bangalore, May 28: Sales tax on coir fibre and coir yarn would be removed, Mr. M.Y. Ghorpade, Finance Minister announced in the Karnataka Council today. Replying to the discussion on the Appropriation Bill, 1974 involving a total sum of about Rs. 796 crores, which the house passed, the Finance Minister said this was being done in the wake of representation from the coir industry that it was a small employment oriented industry. The Minister, however, added that twisted fibre and twisted yarn would not be exempted from the sales tax. Mr. Ghorpade reiterated that the recent symbolic stoppage of the payment of the State Government cheques for two hours by the Reserve Bank did not imply any basic weakness in the financial position of the State.

Move for Rise in Ministers' Pay Criticised

Bangalore, May 28. The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, "ridiculed recent Government measures aimed at achiveving economy in the Legislative Council to-day. Initiating discussion in the Karnataka Appropriation (No. 3) Bill 1974 which was moved earlier by the Finance Minister, Mr. Ghorpade, Mr. Hegde said that by such econopmy measures Government could make very little impact on the finances of the State. Criticising the Government for bringing in the Bills which sought to raise the salaries of ministers, and allowances of legislators, Mr. Hegde said they were introduced at a most "inopportune" time.

Eat, pray, love Sid Mewara (left) and Shashank Jayakumar on their food trail. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A culinary kaleidoscope

The Big Forkers on what they learnt during their culinary adventures in Bengaluru and Delhi

Praveen Sudevan

Cousins Sid Mewara and Shashank Jayakumar explored Bengaluru's food scene last year for the third season of their culinary adventure series, *The Big Forkers*, on YouTube. *The Big Forkers* returned to the city earlier this month for a food walk in Kamanahalli to promote their upcoming season, which explores Delhi's rich culinary culture. Before sharing their experiences in the National Capital, the duo speaks more about Bengaluru.

Coming from different perspectives - Sid, unfamiliar with the city, confesses, "I had this unfortunate stereotype. I thought it would all be *dosa, sambar, idli, vada* - the usual suspects," while Shashank, a seasoned visitor returning after five years, notes, "One thing that's been really cool to see in Bangalore is how it's held onto these classic places, even with the constant transformation."

Both were surprised by what they found. Sid's initial stereotype of a strictly vegetarian city was shattered by the explosion of meat-centric dishes. "The diversity of the food scene and the amount of meat dishes were a total surprise," he admits. Places like Ranganna Military Hotel and Nati Cafe serving Gowda cuisine "blew that stereotype wide open," showcasing the city's mix of communities and signature dishes.

On the other hand, Shashank was impressed by how the city retained its classic spots, like the military cafes, even amidst rapid modernisation. He observes, "These are great, affordable spots that feel like little time capsules."

Shashank, a Mumbai resident, could not help but marvel at the city's massive brewery scene, a stark contrast to his hometown's smaller establishments. "These aren't even microbreweries anymore – they're massive, full-fledged operations," he says, referring to places that could seat hundreds of people. He even discovered a unique trend – breweries popping up right at the airport, catering to weary travellers.

Shashank observes that this adaptability stems from a significant demographic shift. Bengaluru's youthful energy, fueled by a massive influx of young IT professionals, has influenced everything from its food scene to its cultural pockets, like the underground hip-hop scene. "The younger generation now forms the vast majority, a stark contrast to 15 years ago," he says.

For Sid, who comes from a business background, Bengaluru offers a mix of contrasting vibes. The city buzzes with the energy of a giant office, with discussions and brainstorming seemingly happening everywhere. "But then there's this other side of Bangalore, where people unwind, grabbing a beer, enjoying a meal at an old restaurant, and reminiscing about the good old days. It's a more relaxed, even nostalgic atmosphere, which is nice," he adds.

Meanwhile, Delhi offers a kaleidoscope of experiences. In the upcoming season, expect the ancient streets of Old Delhi to juxtapose with the grandeur of Shahjahanabad and the planned neighbourhoods of Civil Lines.

For Sid, Delhi was a nostalgic homecoming. He revisited childhood haunts and explored how the city blends its rich past with modern influences. Food lovers will be treated to lesser-known specialities like the Changezi in Shahjahanabad, featuring slow-cooked onions.

The duo discovered this dish while visiting a family of *qawwals* (Sufi singers), believed to be the descendants of the legendary Amir Khusrow. This interaction is one of the most memorable parts of not just this season but all their travels.

"We were incredibly fortunate to be invited to their home," says Sid. "The mother cooked a fantastic meal. These are dishes you wouldn't find in any restaurant. And we were also treated to an impromptu concert... It was a transcendental experience."

Sometimes, they have had to play to the gallery. "For instance, Indian audiences love *biryani*. If you make eight episodes and throw in a *biryani* episode, chances are that the *biryani* episode will outperform the others. So, occasionally, you have to do that," he says.

The upcoming season in Delhi promises a return to the show's roots, with a renewed focus on authenticity and a deeper connection with viewers.

"Somewhere along the way, we started trying too hard to please the audience. We reacted to comments and analytics, and it felt like we were compromising our own voice. The content lost its spark. Thankfully, we have course-corrected. We realised the importance of staying true to ourselves. We had a larger production team this time, which freed us up to focus on the creative aspects and simply enjoy the experience," says Sid.

Reflecting on what he learned from the show, Shashank says, "I love food, and I love to travel for it, but through *The Big Forkers*, I've gained a whole new appreciation for the stories behind each dish. Seeing how the same dish can transform entirely depending on the region is fascinating. The ingredients, the season, and even the cook's background... all of these factors play a role."

CITYBEATS

Soul food

MAY 29
Be a part of an evening of retro pop music at Muro, which will feature Joshua Paulmer on the guitar accompanying vocalist Raphael. Besides enjoying the music, you can also dig into Muro's creative cocktail range and its authentic Thai and Cantonese cuisine.
At Muro, Shantala Nagar, 8.30pm onwards. Call 69456060 for details.

Chill pill treats

ONGOING
Mad Over Donuts has unveiled its Summer's Coolest Slushies and Coolers menu, which can be paired with their vast range of donuts. The drinks come in the flavours of lychee lemon, peach orange, cranberry citrus, mango passion, blue orange slush and kala khatta to name a few.
Available at all Mad Over Donuts outlets

Art of the past

JUNE 1
Participate in a Gond art workshop -- this is a tribal folk art, practised by a tribe called Gondi, from Madhya Pradesh. The art form dates back nearly 1,400 years and is Dravidian in origin. The session will be conducted by Sindhoor Suryavamshi.
At Atta Galatta, Indiranagar, Bengaluru, 2pm onwards. Tickets on BookMyShow

EATING OUT

World tour Nomad Pizzas give one an all-round pizza experience. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Naples, Chicago, and a bit of mango

Praveen Sudevan

On a mild afternoon, we stepped into Nomad Pizza in Indiranagar. The atmosphere struck a balance between cosmopolitan and rustic. The colour scheme was earthy, with walls that had a rough texture, creating a warm and inviting space.

From the classic flavours of Naples to the age-old rivalry between the thin crust of New York and the deep-dish delights of Chicago, Nomad Pizza promised an exploration of flavours on a plate.

Ankit Verma, the founder, says, "The idea for Nomad Pizza came from our travels around the world. Like a nomad who travels from place to place, our menu takes you to different pizza destinations."

What truly piqued our interest was a seasonal mango-special menu featuring smoothies, salads, pizzas, and desserts. Nomad Pizza boldly throws mangoes into the ring in a world still debating the merits of pineapple on pizza.

"It's mango season, and we're excited to showcase this fruit's versatility," says Sundar Ram, Nomad Pizza's head chef. "Mangoes pair surprisingly well with pizza, especially our Neapolitan pizzas with thin, light crusts."

But before diving into the avante-garde side of the menu – the mango pizzas – we opted for a safer bet: the mango smoothie. It was refreshingly packed with flavour, though the sweetness might be a touch overpowering for some.

Next, we opted for the grilled chicken, mushroom, and leek pizza with a sourdough base. The pizza itself was a visual delight – fresh cheese adorned the top, and the grilled chicken looked perfectly cooked.

While the flavours of the mushrooms and leeks were a bit subtle, the sourdough base truly shone.

Now came the moment of truth: the mango and ham pizza. This was, without a doubt, our most adventurous choice. But what a pleasant surprise!

The sweetness of the cubed mango chunks played beautifully against the savoury smokiness of the ham, and the red sauce provided a welcome tang that brought the whole flavour profile together.

Needing a brief respite from the world of pizza, we turned our attention to the mango burrata salad. It featured a mix of fresh lettuce and peppery rocket leaves.

Pillowy burrata cheese added a creamy richness, but the real star of the show was once again the mango. It elevated the salad from "above average" to "good."

Now, for the uninitiated (which we admit we were), a Chicago-style pizza is a whole different beast. We knew the Chicago chicken pizza would be heavier, but its thickness bowled us over. It was a glorious avalanche of mozzarella, red sauce, grilled chicken, smoked chicken, and peri peri chicken sausage. It is a pizza made for sharing.

By the time dessert arrived, the American chocolate chip cookie pizookie, we were already comfortably full. But hey, who can resist a warm, slightly gooey chocolate chip cookie the size of a mini pizza? We decided to stretch our limits (and our waistbands).

But as we were getting ready for another round of sugar rush, darkness engulfed the restaurant – an extended mid-day power cut. The staff at Nomad Pizza quickly got candles for every table. And we enjoyed the dessert in darkness.

Nomad Pizza Bengaluru
Hits: Mango and ham pizza
Misses: Chicago chicken pizza
Cost for two: ₹1000 (without alcohol)

Capture a city on canvas

Shilpa Anandraj

Kolkata-based artist, Nikita Agarwal, will showcase her works Ripples of Reflection in Bengaluru. The exhibition, featuring acrylic on canvas with a few works in charcoals, will be on at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath from June 6.

The paintings are inspired by the picturesque city of Varanasi and this is Nikita's first solo show in Bengaluru. She has earlier participated in shows in Kolkata and New Delhi. The self-taught artist says have captured her explorations of Varanasi's spiritual charm.

Nikita hopes art enthusiasts will find solace and calm in her portrayal of this temple city.

She says she chose Varanasi as the city delves into the soul. "Every ghat serves as a portal to the world, where I believe spirituality, history and culture meet."

The paintings use bold brush strokes and a vibrant colour palette, inspired by Varanasi's ghats, reflecting the city's spiritual essence on canvas.

Nikita says apart from Varanasi's temples, she is also inspired by the cremation ghat, Manikarnika Ghat. "It is a holy place and my artwork will invite you to the city's enduring beauty".

Tribute to an ancient city Nikita Agarwal with works from her Ripples of Reflection collection. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hailing from Kolkata, the artist says the city has contributed to her growth as an artist. "I have learnt and grown with the city. Kolkata is a place where I feel I am meant to be. I have also explored a variety of art works and culture in Kolkata with various artists that have made me what I am today."

"The canvas is dominated with the hues of rich blues, orange and purples and I believe each piece breathes life into the weathered ghats, with saffron-clad *sadhus* and marigold offerings along the banks of Ganges, celebrating Varanasi's harmonious blend of tradition and modernity," says Nikita about Ripples of Reflection.

A student of Business Management with a diploma in Fashion Designing from NIFT, Nikita says talent is a pursued interest.

The exhibition will also feature a few paintings from Nikita's Divine Series. "It is also inspired by the city of Varanasi. The highlight of this series is the one depicting sadhus and a majestic Nandi, it embodies patience and the eternal anticipation."

Being an artist, Nikita says is a celebration. "Though the pros and cons of this path go hand-in-hand, I have experienced mostly the pros. Art has boosted my confidence as an individual. It also brings recognition and pushes me to create more works."

Ripples of Reflection will be on in Bengaluru from June 6 to 10 at Chitrakala Parishath's Gallery Number 3 between 11 am and 7pm. The works are priced at ₹80,000 upwards.

Six lives lost as rain wreaks havoc in Kerala

Low-lying areas in Kochi inundated as city gets 103 mm of rainfall in an hour, pointing to a cloudburst; seven houses damaged in landslip; night traffic on Wagamon route banned; water released from 2 dams; tourists barred from two hill stations, including Ponmudi; rain alert continues today

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

After a brief hiatus, rain triggered by a cyclonic circulation over south Tamil Nadu intensified across Kerala, wreaking havoc and causing severe waterlogging in many places.

The rain that pounded Kochi city on Sunday night and Monday morning left low-lying areas near Infopark inundated, throwing life out of gear.

The rain gauge set up at the Cochin University of Science and Technology recorded around 103 mm of rain in just one hour. Rain of 100 mm an hour is classified as a cloudburst event. However, the India Meteorological Department has not confirmed any cloudburst in the State.

Battered city: A flooded road in Kochi on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The heavy rain pounding various parts of Kottayam since Sunday triggered a landslip in the Bharananganam village, damaging seven houses. No casualty has been reported.

Six people lost their lives in various rain-related incidents in the State.

In Thiruvananthapuram, a fisherman, John, 64, died when a fishing vessel capsized in the Muthalapozhi harbour area. Rajan, 57, from Idukki, died after falling into a river while catching fish.

Three drown in rivers

Ashokan, 56, of Thiruvananthapuram; Sinan, 14, of Kanhangad, and Eldose, 15, from Perumbavoor drowned in rivers. Aravind of Mavelikara, 31, died after being trapped under an uprooted coconut tree.

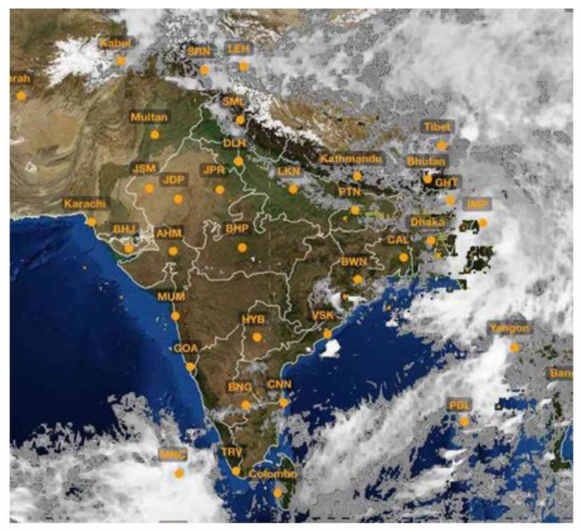
In the wake of heavy rainfall, the respective district administrations have banned the entry of tourists into hill stations such as Ponmudi in Thiruvananthapuram and Ela Veezha Poonchira in Kottayam. Night traffic along the Erattupetta-Wagamon route has been banned following landslips in some areas.

Four shutters of the Malankara Dam in Idukki and all shutters of the Aruvikkara Dam in the capital have been raised.

The IMD has issued an orange alert for four districts – Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam – warning of very heavy rainfall and a yellow alert for four districts – Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Idukki and Thrissur – warning of isolated heavy rain on Wednesday.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep. Heat wave to severe heat wave conditions likely to prevail in many parts over Chandigarh, Delhi; in isolated pockets over east Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	207	31.5	25.1	Kozhikode	—	30.0	27.7
Ahmedabad	—	44.1	29.0	Kurnool	—	38.0	27.6
Aizawl	137	26.5	23.0	Lucknow	—	43.7	29.6
Allahabad	—	48.2	31.2	Madurai	—	38.4	26.6
Bengaluru	—	31.2	22.4	Mangaluru	—	31.3	26.7
Bhopal	—	45.1	31.0	Mumbai	—	34.6	29.4
Bhubaneswar	—	39.4	29.6	Mysuru	—	31.4	—
Chandigarh	—	46.2	26.5	New Delhi	—	45.8	27.4
Chennai	—	41.1	31.0	Patna	—	42.8	29.4
Coimbatore	—	31.6	23.6	Port Blair	20.4	30.6	24.6
Dehradun	—	40.6	24.6	Puducherry	—	38.0	29.0
Gangtok	8	24.6	18.3	Pune	—	36.6	26.8
Goa	—	34.4	29.0	Raipur	—	46.0	31.2
Guwahati	31	26.6	24.5	Ranchi	—	40.2	24.4
Hubballi	—	34.0	25.0	Shillong	242	19.4	17.2
Hyderabad	—	39.3	26.7	Shimla	—	34.6	22.2
Imphal	54	24.0	21.7	Srinagar	—	32.6	15.4
Jaipur	—	46.6	33.3	Thiruvananthapuram	67	29.0	24.0
Kochi	78	28.8	25.4	Tiruchi	—	37.5	28.6
Kohima	32	23.6	17.4	Vijayawada	—	39.4	29.2
Kolkata	40.2	35.2	25.4	Visakhapatnam	—	35.5	20.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.24	.46	.35	163	137	
Bengaluru	.13	—	.14	43	135	
Chennai	7	9	105	132	—	
Delhi	.32	166	.55	337	324	
Hyderabad	.27	.21	.37	52	90	
Kolkata	7	.27	.23	53	49	
Lucknow	7	.53	.30	248	194	
Mumbai	.32	.14	8	—	182	
Pune	.14	8	.47	47	81	
Visakhapatnam	.14	.48	.39	81	151	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 315 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

From Page One

Spoken English classes in govt., aided schools

"The RIE has already developed the spoken English module and we will implement the same. But in the initial stage, the GPT teachers will create the contents of spoken English," Ms. Cauvery said.

Across the State, there are 53,782 schools, including 67,273 government and 6,479 aided schools. While the medium of instruction is bilingual in 2,403 schools, it's English in 283 schools. Most of the English-medium schools are in towns and urban areas. English-medium education is a daydream for children of government and aided schools in rural areas, and spoken English classes will be a boon for these children, said many education experts who welcomed the DSEL decision.

Niranjanaradhya V.P., a development educationist, said, "Imparting spoken English is important, and it is a welcome development. However, the educational guide also mentions English/Hindi vocabulary. This is quite surprising. Bilingual education combines the mother tongue (Kannada) and the second language, English. Though intentions of introducing spoken English is ideal, the plan is quite confusing."

INBRIEF

Three teenagers drown in check dam in Andhra Pradesh

Three teenagers drowned while taking bath in a check dam at Jagaram in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday morning. The incident occurred at Jagaram Gadda in Vizianagaram. When one of the boys started drowning, the others jumped in to save him. All of them drowned as they did not know how to swim. There was no foul play in the incident, a police officer said. Their bodies were shifted to the Vizianagaram government hospital for post-mortem. A case was registered. PTI

The Hindu wins WAN-IFRA award for audience engagement

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

'Made of Chennai', a brand campaign by *The Hindu*, won in the 'Best in Audience Engagement' category at the WAN-IFRA 2024 Digital Media Awards Worldwide in Denmark.

The awards ceremony held on May 27 acknowledged excellence and groundbreaking digital innovation across a range of categories that recognise the changing way people receive and engage with news. In the press release by WAN-IFRA, the jury members said: "The campaign is an amazing project connecting people and the city via comprehensive touch points across various media. A testament of how powerful a media platform could be when it's used in a very creative way!"

Suresh Balakrishna, Chief Revenue Officer of The Hindu Group, said, "The award for 'Made of Chennai' highlights the city's deep affection for *The Hindu*. I would like to thank WAN-IFRA and applaud their efforts for bringing to the fore some of the best efforts from across the globe."

'Made of Chennai', launched in August 2023, was a 45-day celebration of the city's 'birthday'.

Order on BRS leader's plea reserved

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday reserved its order on bail plea of BRS leader K. Kavitha in a money laundering case linked to the Delhi excise policy case.

During the hearing, the CBI and the ED opposed her bail plea, saying she played a key role in the conspiracy behind the "scam" and being an active politician she cannot seek parity with "vulnerable" women.

Country's policies should be aimed at poor: Chidambaram

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Congress leader and former Union Minister P. Chidambaram has called for a reorientation of the country's economic policies to focus on the poor. He was in Kozhikode on Tuesday to deliver a lecture on the late socialist leader M.P. Veerendrakumar, on the topic 'Inclusive growth: a myth or a reality?'

Mr. Chidambaram said that at the moment, the country's policies and programmes were oriented towards the rich, or the top 50% and not the bottom 50%. "We must pivot towards the poor and look at the poor, the oppressed, the weak, and those left behind. Unless we understand the economic hierarchy and the social hierarchy, one of which mirrors the other, and reorient our policies towards the bottom half, especially the SCs, STs and other depressed sections, it will not be possible to call us an egalitarian society," he said.

P. Chidambaram

While claiming that the fundamental principles of liberalisation and an open economy were relevant and valid, the Congress leader said that the government should reorient its programmes and policies towards the poor as well.

'BRS leaders stopped ex-intelligence officer from coming to India'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Congress MLA Yennem Srinivas Reddy alleged that some leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi were preventing former State Intelligence Bureau chief Prabhakar Rao from returning to India as they feared his revelations in the questioning would expose them.

Mr. Prabhakar is the main accused in the phone tapping case and he is currently in the U.S. At a press conference here, Mr. Reddy said, "My suggestion to Mr. Prabhakar is to come here and face the probe".

K.K.R.T.C CE DIVISION BALLARI

No.KKRTC/EE/CEB/DB/159,160,161&162/2024-25 Date: 27.05.2024

E-PROCRUMENT SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.08,09,10 & 11/2024-25

In E-procurement the contractors will have to upload all informations in website only. i.e. **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** Bidders/contractors need to register in the e-Procurement portal to submit their bids online and any corrigendum for this notification will be published through E-Procurement portal only. **More information E-Procurement Helpline 808-25501216 / 25501227 or 08392-294828/9972039797**

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ NO	Name of Work	Amount put to Tender (Rs in Lakhs)	EMD Amount (Rs in Lakhs)
1	Construction of Bus Station at Bandi Village in Yalaburga Taluk Rs.300.00 Lakhs (Call-2).	300-00	4,50,000-00
2	Construction of Bus Station at Hirevankalkunta Village in Yalaburga Taluk (Call-2).	300-00	4,50,000-00
3	Construction of Bus Station at Kudari Moti Village in Kukanur Taluk (Call-2).	300-00	4,50,000-00
4	Construction of Bus Station at Rajuru Aduru Village in Kukanur Taluk (Call-2).	300-00	4,50,000-00

DIPR/Ballari/16/KSMCA/2024-25

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MADHURI** Mocharla, R/a No.Flat 504, Tower 8 Salarpuriya Sattva Divinity Pantarapalya, Bangalore-560039 have changed my name to Madhuri Reddy Mocharla vide affidavit dt: 28.05.2024 sworn before Notary Sumangala Hegde, B'luru

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MEGHYA** Naik Subra Naik, R/a No.01, 6th Cross, BEL Layout, 1st Stage, BSNL, Back Side, Byadarahalli, Bangalore-560091 have changed my name to Subra Naik vide affidavit dt: 27.05.2024 sworn before Notary K.V.Mani, B'luru

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Baruvuri Venkata Sai Sruthi** d/o Venkata Surya Narayana Baruvuri aged about 31 years residing at House no. 25-2-611 Auditya Nilayam Simhapuri Centre Vedayapalem A K Nagar Post Nellore 524004 Andhra Pradesh, I now desire to change my name from **Baruvuri Venkata Sai Sruthi** to **SRISHTI,** vide affidavit dated 28/5/2024 sworn to before Smt.Vatsala advocate and notary Bangalore.

I, **SYEDA** Zaynah Fathima, D/o Syed Ali Hassan, R/at No.15, C3, King Way Apartment, King Street, Richmond Town, Museum Road, Bangalore-560025, have changed my minor daughter's name from Syeda Zaynah Fathima to Syeda Zaynah Hassan vide Affidavit dated 24/05/2024 before Notary K.V. Mani, Bengaluru.

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
NO.1 RAJAJI SALAI, CHENNAI - 1

Notice Inviting E-tender Cum E-Auction in Central Public Procurement Portal for allotment of areas in as is where is condition, inside the Custom Bound Area, without renewal option for the following purposes, under two cover system from 29.05.2024 to 18.06.2024.

(i) E-Tender Notification No. C6/320/2024/T dt.29.05.2024 - Allotment of open space paved 60sq.m at North of Coastal Berth, near Aga Light, Area IV for the purpose of Marine Training Institute for a period of 3 years

(ii) E-Tender Notification No. C6/321/2024/T dt.29.05.2024 - Allotment of Covered space (RCC Roof) 9sqm, for the purpose of setting up a Money Changer / Foreign Exchange counter, for a period of 5 years

(iii) E-Tender Notification No. C6/322/2024/T dt.29.05.2024 - Allotment of Open space unpaved 22sq.m at north of eastern corner of road inter section near Gate No.2 in Area I for the purpose of Canteen/Refreshment stall, for a period of 11 months

For further details visit Ch.P.A. website **www.chennaiport.gov.in** and **www.eprocure.gov.in**

TRAFFIC MANAGER

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No.2784 / OAVS. Date : 27/05/2024

Notice for downloading the e-Admit card

Pursuant to Notification No.2462, dated.03.05.2024 and 2476, dated 06.05.2024 of OAVS for the Recruitment of Principals and Teachers for OAVs, (Advt. No. 01/2024) the CBT examination is scheduled to be held on **05.06.2024, 10.06.2024 and 11.06.2024.**

The link for downloading e-Admit card is available in the OAVS website. It is here by informed to all concerned to visit the website and download their e-Admit card.

-Sd-
State Project Director

n-05

Turnout conundrum

The low voting percentage in many States is a cause for concern

With just one phase left in the general election 2024, a stocktaking exercise on voter participation across the country reveals a significant dampening in turnout in this set of elections in comparison to the 2019 and even the 2014 general elections. There are State and regional level variations – voters in the east, northeast and many in the south typically voted higher than those in west, central and north India. Yet, barring some exceptions such as Telangana and Karnataka, where voter turnout registered a small increase from 62.8% to 65.7% and 68.8% to 70.6% among others, there has been a general decline in voting across States in 2024. As an analysis in *The Hindu* revealed, not only was there a dip in turnout in percentage terms, but there was also a decline in voter turnout in absolute terms in 132 of the 485 constituencies that went to polls in the first six phases. The high number of seats that encountered a dip in voter participation is unprecedented since the latest delimitation that was conducted prior to the 2009 general election. A closer look at the numbers shows that there was a significant bump in the total electorate (eligible voters above the age of 18 years) in 2014, and slight increases in 2019 and 2024. But it was only in 2024 that voter turnout dropped dramatically in many constituencies.

This drop in turnout can possibly be explained by political factors. Was there lower enthusiasm to vote in States which did not feature a strong contest among the parties in the fray? Does this explain the relatively low turnout in Gujarat (60.1%, a 4.4 point drop from 2019), where the Bharatiya Janata Party is in a dominant position or Kerala (71.3%, 6.6 point drop) where both the main rivals, the Left and the Congress along with their allies, are part of the INDIA bloc nationally? Has inter-State migration been a factor which possibly explains the low turnout in the northern and central States? Bihar, for example, has seen a significant gender gap, with women voters far outnumbering men in participation in percentage terms. Have the heatwave conditions contributed to electors deciding to stay at home? These are questions that deserve a closer look at data and the Election Commission of India must play a role in answering some of them. India has always enjoyed a higher degree of participation relative to other electoral democracies and a significant drop, as seen this year, is cause for concern. Voter apathy over the longer term can undermine the democratic process itself. People get the government they deserve when they vote, and the government they do not deserve when they do not vote.

The last lap

Rafael Nadal's spirit no longer seems able to power his body

For a good part of the last two decades, everything at the French Open seemed like a prelude to one man's crowning moment on the concluding Sunday of the tournament. The year 2024, however, has turned out differently for Rafael Nadal, who had clinched the singles title on 14 of his 18 prior visits, as he made an emotional first-round exit on Monday, losing to fourth seed Alexander Zverev in straight sets. It was only the fourth time in 116 matches that the Spaniard had lost on Parisian clay, and the moment, more than any in recent times, had a valedictory feel to it. Ever since he suffered a hip injury at the 2023 Australian Open and missed the rest of the season, Nadal's tennis future has been a huge question mark. The 22-time Major champion has not been very optimistic himself, for he perhaps knows that at nearly 38, and with an injury ravaged body that has allowed him to play just 12 times this year, the end is near. Yet, that has not stopped him from taking to the court with childlike enthusiasm. He played in Barcelona, Madrid and Rome – places where he has collectively secured 27 trophies – soaking in the fans' adulation in what has come to resemble a much-deserved victory lap.

To be sure, Nadal has not closed the door on returning to his favourite stomping grounds on the red dirt in 2025. His immediate target is the 2024 Paris Olympics, whose tennis event will be held at Roland-Garros in late July-early August. But there is little doubt that the ground he once guarded with an iron fist is fertile for an almighty jostle to anoint a new king. World No.1 Novak Djokovic, the 24-time Major and three-time French Open champion, would have been the obvious favourite if his form had not nose-dived. He is without a title this season and has revamped his entire support staff to jump-start his year. Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are both coming in after recovering from injuries. Alexander Zverev, who won the Rome Masters, seems dialled in but will have to deal with a domestic abuse trial in parallel. Casper Ruud, who won Barcelona and Geneva recently, will hope to go all the way after two straight runner-up finishes at Roland-Garros. Among women, three-time champion Iga Swiatek is the overwhelming favourite, and is expected to be challenged by Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff. For India, the singles challenge ended prematurely with Sumit Nagal's loss, but Rohan Bopanna and Yuki Bhambri will aim to fly the flag high with their respective doubles partners.

The Constitution, a surprise entrant in poll battlefield

Yamini Aiyar
is a public policy scholar

Neelanjan Sircar
is Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research

The Chakkipat neighbourhood of Agra in Uttar Pradesh was adorned with flags of B.R. Ambedkar with the tagline *kalam ka badshah* (master of the pen), an allusion to the seminal role of Ambedkar in drafting the Constitution of India. We spoke to a group of young Jatav men, once a core vote bank of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). As the BSP's graph has trended downward, these men had voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2019 general election, but they will not support the BJP this time. The reason, the Constitution – "Dr. Ambedkar means everything to us. We don't think it's too easy to change the Constitution, but we believe the BJP wants to change the Constitution."

The rhetoric of electoral dominance

Why has the Constitution emerged as an explicit site of contestation in this election? The proximate trigger was the BJP's declaration of "400 *paar*" (a reference to its assertion of winning 400 seats) and remarks, by some leaders, early in the campaign, that total electoral domination in this election would empower the BJP to change the Constitution. Opposition leaders were quick to mobilise. BSP leader Mayawati's nephew and former BSP national coordinator Akash Anand gave rousing speeches. Indeed, days after Ms. Mayawati sacked Akash Anand, the Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav took to X (formerly Twitter) to publicly remark that even traditional voters of the BSP are voting for the INDIA bloc to save the Constitution. The Congress's Rahul Gandhi has taken to symbolically waving a copy of the Constitution at his campaign rallies. The Opposition has declared this election to be a battle for "saving the constitution" and it is having resonance on the ground.

Scholars make an important distinction between constitutional principles and ordinary laws. Constitutional principles frame fundamental rights and are of a "higher order" that every citizen must obey. Ordinary laws, on the other hand, are rules, often guided by constitutional principles, that govern society. Ordinary laws, in India, regularly police our spaces. They discriminate and are used coercively by the state in ways that undermine freedoms and disempower citizens. Laws that police who you can marry, whether you can use the Internet and what you can eat are some illustrations of this. However, these laws can also be challenged and changed. Constitutional values provide the basis for challenging discriminatory law.

> The fact that the ordinary Indian is worried about the Constitution is of far greater political significance than the question of who wins the election

Historian Rohit De's book, *A People's Constitution*, offers a powerful account of how ordinary citizens have mobilised around constitutional principles throughout independent India's history to secure rights. Challenging social and economic deprivation and preserving equality of status are at the heart of India's constitutional project. As former Chief Justice of India Y.V. Chandrachud powerfully notes, in the Minerva Mills case, the Constitution provides us "the obligation of securing to the people liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity and the assurance that the dignity of the individual will at all costs be preserved". It is when these very constitutional values are challenged that the Constitution rather than law enters the domain of mass politics.

A young BJP supporter from the Pasi community makes this clear. "I am happy with Narendra Modi..... But I absolutely don't want a Hindu *rashtra*." When we ask him what Hindu *rashtra* means, he responds in one word: *bhedbhav* (discrimination). A young Yadav farmer on the outskirts of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh concurs, "The constitution matters because it protects us... it gave us reservations. *Humein Samvidhaan bachana hai* (the Constitution must be protected)."

An interplay in north India

The interplay between the Constitution and political mobilisation has fundamentally shaped the trajectory of democratic politics in North India. Reservations found place in the Constitution primarily as compensatory provisions to redress historical disadvantage emerging in the 1990s as the primary mobilisational tool for asserting representational claims of lower caste groups in the 1990s. The Modi juggernaut, with its ability to forge a cross-caste coalition, appeared to have shifted the arc by forging a cross-caste, Hindu coalition. For much of this decade, the logic of caste-based mobilisation seemed to have receded in the background, allowing the BJP, to introduce and pass the 103rd Amendment to the Constitution mandating 10% reservations for economically weaker sections (EWS) amongst unreserved (read upper caste) categories, to muted opposition.

The reemergence of the grammar of the Constitution, rights and reservation in the 2024 election must not be misread as harking back to the Mandal politics of yore. There is something far more significant at play here. The rhetoric of "changing the Constitution" challenges the very principles upon which this country was founded. And it is this that is causing dissonance among voters with the BJP's logic of cross-caste political mobilisation. The Yadav voter we spoke to articulated this clearly: "The Constitution protects our fundamental rights. It ensures equality between castes and communities."

The fact that the ordinary Indian is worried about the Constitution is of far greater political significance than the question of who wins the election. Against the backdrop of total dominance that the BJP projected at the start of the electoral campaign, the concerns over the Constitution, expressed by the ordinary voters, are constitutive of growing anxieties over democratic erosion. And it constrains the democratic legitimacy of the government even if the BJP comes to power again, as projected.

A mirror to contradictions

But the constitutional discourse, as it is emerging, also mirrors the deep contradictions that have shaped contemporary politics in India. It is instructive that even as Dalit voters speak of the Constitution and rights, the constitutional principle of "secularism" and religious equality was a concern expressed primarily by Muslim voters, who spoke repeatedly against "Hindu-Muslim" politics. Secularism, via the Constitution, found voice during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act back in early 2020, but only among Muslims.

Arguably, the heightened polarised rhetoric adopted by the Prime Minister in recent weeks is a response to the re-emergence of caste coalitions with the Constitution as the centre-piece. Hindu voters are not blind to the communal nature of this rhetoric. However, this is not their primary concern. Their preoccupation is primarily with caste-based discrimination and reservations. The silence around the constitutional aspiration of secularism remains conspicuous against the backdrop of the deeply poisonous and divisive Hindu-Muslim rhetoric that has dominated this election.

If the 2024 election is indeed a battle for the Constitution, then the silences tell us as much about the critical fault lines that our polity has to confront, as it does of the possibilities of a more substantive politics of rights and equality.

Still no sign of the language of equity and inclusion

Anukrati Nigam
is a data scientist and a research volunteer at the Association of Socially Applicable Research, Pune

Radhikaa Sharma
is a research volunteer at the Association of Socially Applicable Research, Pune

Dr. Satendra Singh
is a disability rights defender and director professor at the University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi

The general election 2024 is almost nearing its end. Yet, when the Election Commission of India (ECI) made the announcement for the election in March, the long video televised and propagated on social media, stood out for one detail – the absence of sign language interpreters. This is a small, but significant, example of the ways in which everyday life in India excludes Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) citizens.

India's push for equity in education, health care, and rights cannot succeed without dismantling ableist barriers that exclude DHH people.

Consider the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness, to prevent and treat hearing impairment and provide medical rehabilitation. While it is well-structured, it does not focus on the quality of life. It discusses theoretical aspects of screening procedures and hearing aid prescription, but does not mention the Indian Sign Language (ISL) which is an integral form of deaf communication. The Social Justice Ministry set up the ISL Research and Training Centre in 2015 officially, but ISL is still not recognised as an official language. Despite the National Education Policy 2020 recommending the standardised teaching of ISL across schools, its use in education systems remains sparse even in schools for the deaf.

Sign language versus oralism

The Indian education system still focuses on "oralism", where deaf people are taught to use their voices and lip read, instead of using their hands to communicate.

Most educators in deaf schools are not trained in ISL. Instead of creating better access and remediating marginalisation, the current deaf education system focuses on "rehabilitation", asking the deaf to adjust to their surroundings instead of removing social barriers. An exclusive focus on oralism has been criticised for creating an isolatory social structure for deaf people in an inherently ableist world. On the other hand, integrating sign language has been found to help deaf children in cognitive development and prevent linguistic deprivation; over 70 countries recognise national sign languages legally, which makes education and critical information truly accessible to deaf citizens.

> Equity in education, health care, and rights in India cannot succeed unless the ableist barriers that exclude Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens are removed

Our ableism is reflected in how invisible the deaf are in India.

A headcount in India

In the 2011 Census, there were five million hearing-impaired people in India. The National Association of the Deaf counts 18 million. The World Health Organization estimates nearly 63 million Indians to have significant hearing impairment. However, they rarely find inclusion in our lives. Only 5% of deaf children find themselves in school, and it often takes them much longer to graduate, thanks to an oralist course structure.

Despite government initiatives to employ the deaf, they often struggle to secure employment. Protests erupted in 2020 due to recruitment favouring those with less than 40% hearing impairment. Multiple petitions to recognise ISL have been stonewalled, citing the adequacy of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, (RPDA) 2016 for preserving and advancing the language. This failure, despite several protests, is a covert yet overt act of marginalisation.

What does everyday life look like for deaf people? Public transport announcements, TV shows, directions within public structures, and even calling helplines are made insurmountable tasks due to a lack of accessibility. Minuscule everyday things taken for granted by others become wars won after years of litigation and advocacy. Although Doordarshan pioneered a weekly news segment in ISL in 1987, its precedent has not been taken up by private news channels. While films, Indian Premier League 2024 cricket matches and OTT shows have come up with accessible options, we have a lot of slack to pick up.

Opportunities for the deaf community remain limited to housekeeping jobs, wait staff, and data entry operators. The private sector has programmes in place for accessibility and inclusion with captioning and interpreter services. However, the government sector has made little progress. Several state- and national-level protests have been mounted by the deaf over the years. Their demands for accessible education and better employment have been met with *lathi* charge or lackadaisical promises. Despite the RPDA, policy changes mean little in the face of such lethargy in implementation.

The deaf community faces challenges and additional discrimination with access to health care as most hospitals in India lack interpreters. Complications increase for mental health-care access to the deaf community due to a lack of training in language interpretation. The Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 promises mental health care for all, but it is not effectively implemented, with only 250 certified sign language interpreters and no clear data on ISL-trained mental health professionals.

What needs to be done

The present situation demands diverging from ableism towards accessibility. ISL should be recognised as a language officially, and its use must be naturalised in schools and colleges, for hearing and DHH students alike. It should be taught by DHH individuals, further buffeting their employment opportunities. The hearing population should be able to practise ISL in everyday situations to achieve fluency in the language.

Health-care systems must be updated so that the deaf population has easy and accessible communication at all levels. DHH patients benefit from receiving care from language-concordant physicians. However, the regulatory medical, dental, and nursing commissions impose significant barriers on DHH individuals aspiring to health-care professions. Inclusivity will not only make the health-care workforce more diverse and inclusive but will also mainstream ISL interpreters.

Deaf programming should be par for the course across media channels. Channels with English language programming often have accessible subtitles. However, Hindi and other regional languages do not have ISL interpretation or subtitles. Government event announcements should have live ISL interpreters, a common feature in several countries. One can hope that with timely interventions in the right direction, we may witness real-time ISL interpretations in the next election mandated by the ECI.

Finally, more issues exist than are highlighted in this article. The authorities concerned should pay heed to the DHH community and its needs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A moment for introspection

Every once in a while, a case comes up which questions our collective conscience, our justice system (or the lack of it) and rampant corruption at all levels. The Pune car crash case has brought out the extent to which our system goes to protect the guilty if they are influential. The unimaginable dereliction of duty at all levels, from police officers to even doctors, has shocked the nation. Even more sad is the extent to which the parents of the accused are going all out to protect their child. This case should be an eye-opener to review the law regarding juvenile offences. Minors are no longer minors given the gravity of the offences they commit. So, even the punishment should be in accordance with the crime, with no concession for age.

Sharada Sivaram,
Ernakulam, Kochi, Kerala

Safety norms

There are established fire safety norms while constructing hospitals, malls, cinemas, apartments and other structures. But these are often violated by builders to save money. Government authorities accept bribes and permit irregularities. It has become a habit to raise a hue and cry only when such tragedies occur but turn a blind eye later. Structures must have proper fire and electricity safety devices, which must be checked.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

Cranking up

Slowly, but certainly, Indian cinema is catching up with the best in the world arena and securing an armful of awards at Cannes.

The win for *All we imagine as Light* is a pointer. The most enthusing aspect is that young women are behind the history-creating success stories. *The Elephant Whisperers* was just the beginning.

Ayyasseri Raveendranath,
Aranmula, Kerala

Corrections & Clarifications

A clarification in respect of the Editorial, "Cannes do" (May 28, 2024): In 2024, Payal Kapadia won the second highest honour or the Grand Prix, but in 1946, when the Palme d'or or the top prize was called the Grand Prix, Chetan Anand won for his film, *Neecha Nagar*, along with several other films including David Lean for *Brief Encounter.*

The question of Palestine's UN membership

Israel's war on Gaza has raised several ethical, political, and diplomatic questions. One diplomatic development that has attracted a lot of interest is Palestine's renewed application for membership of the United Nations (UN). Ironically, its quest is stuck at the UN Security Council (UNSC) due mainly to the geopolitical calculations of the U.S., which argued that membership should follow and not precede a negotiated solution to the long-standing conflict.

This is not the first time that Palestine has attempted to obtain UN membership. In 2011 too, its request was opposed by the veto-bearing U.S. in the UNSC. Since then, Palestine enjoys only non-member observer status.

This year, in April, after the UNSC failed to agree on Palestine's request because of the lone veto cast by the U.S. in its capacity as a permanent member, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) stepped in to voice support to the Palestinian application. On May 10, the UNGA overwhelmingly adopted a resolution affirming Palestine's eligibility to assume full membership in the UN. It also urged the UNSC to favourably consider Palestine's request.

C.S.R. Murthy

is former Professor of International Organization at JNU, New Delhi. He is the author of 'India in the United Nations: Interplay of Interests and Principles'

Norms and politics

The UN requires membership seekers to be "peace loving" states and to be able and willing, in its judgment, to carry out the obligations of the Charter. While the criteria were liberally interpreted, the procedural threshold laid down for admission turned out to be decisive and difficult, and was dictated by the political exigencies of the five permanent members (P5) in the UNSC at any given time. As such, membership applications require recommendation without the express opposition of any of the P5 before the UNGA accepts the admission request. In other words, the UNSC's recommendation is ruled out if any of the P5 casts a negative vote by exercising their veto power, whereas no such veto power applies in the UNGA except that the decision should be cleared by a two-thirds majority.

When Cold War politics stalled numerous admission requests in the UNSC in early years, the UNGA sought the World Court's opinion on whether the UNGA had the power to admit states in the absence of the UNSC's recommendation. The Court ruled in 1948 that the UNSC's recommendation is a prerequisite for the UNGA to exercise its power. Subsequently, the deadlock in the UNSC was broken to recommend all pending applications. This marked successive decades of steady increase of the total membership from the 51 founding members to 193 today. It would not be off the mark to note that membership of the UN is invariably viewed as a sought-after confirmation of sovereign statehood of the countries which gained independence from foreign rule or occupation.

The example of Mongolia is comparable to Palestine's plea. When Mongolia's membership application was stuck in the UNSC, the UNGA intervened with a resolution similar to what was done in the Palestine case, suggesting that Mongolia deserves a favourable recommendation by the UNSC. Eventually Mongolia became a member in 1961.

India's approach

India joined 142 member countries in supporting the UNGA in the May 2024 resolution favouring Palestine's case for membership. India opined that membership status could enhance the prospect of a two-state solution to the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict. Notably, India's position to the membership question is now entirely in line with the approach articulated during the Nehruvian era – that UN membership should be open to all state applicants without discrimination. In fact, there is not a single instance of India opposing any country's membership so far. India supported Pakistan's admission to the UN in 1947 and also representation of the People's Republic of China's in 1971, despite a prolonged border conflicts with the latter.

While it is true that the U.S. or the former USSR/Russian Federation stood in the way of many applicants' prospects of becoming UN members, China is not free from blame either. After being seated in the UNSC in 1971, the People's Republic of China vetoed newly liberated Bangladesh's membership application.

What is the way forward?

Clearly Palestine cannot assume full membership bypassing the UNSC and the U.S. China and Russia are apprehensive that such bypassing could become a precedent for the admission of Taiwan or Kosovo later. In a less likely scenario, the U.S. might refrain from casting yet again its veto or abstain from voting, as an expression of displeasure with Israel for ignoring its advice to cease attacks against Gazan civilians, thereby paving the way for the UNGA's approval of Palestine's membership. Israel might protest and quit the UN. If the UNSC stalemate continues, the UNGA could possibly consider keeping Israel out of its deliberations. Such a bold tactical move, which is short of Israel's suspension or expulsion that would be impractical without the UNSC's recommendation, has precedents. South Africa in the apartheid era and the Serb Republic of Yugoslavia during the brutal ethnic cleansing era were barred from participating in the UNGA.

Apart from these theoretical options, accretion of participatory privileges to Palestine, just short of the power to vote in the UNGA and eligibility to be elected to other major principal organs of the UN, from September would signal that might cannot become right in this age.

This is not the first time that Palestine has attempted to obtain UN membership. In 2011 too, its request was opposed by the veto-bearing U.S. in the UNSC

Walking the tightrope on the liquor policy

The LDF government would do well to forge a political and social consensus first

STATE OF PLAY

G. Anand
anand.g@thehindu.co.in

A leaked voice message from a WhatsApp group of members of the Federation of Kerala Hotels Association (FKHA), a powerful and rich lobby of bar owners in Kerala, has sparked a controversy in the State.

The voice note, recorded by an FKHA office bearer, purportedly urged bar owners to pool money to influence the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government's upcoming liquor policy. The message surfaced days after the Kerala Tourism Department held a routine online meeting of stakeholders, including hotel, resort, and houseboat owners.

The Leader of the Opposition, V.D. Satheesan, who belongs to the Congress, accused the government of dangling the prospect of lifting dry days and extending bar timings in exchange for sizeable backhanders from the liquor lobby. He alleged that the FKHA had sought ₹2.5 lakh each from its 801 members to raise ₹20 crore for the ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist). Mr. Satheesan said corruption, and not statecraft or public good, informed the LDF's policymaking. He also demanded the resignation of Excise Minister M.B. Rajesh and Tourism Minister Mohammad Riyaz, who, he alleged, were at the centre of the plot.

Youth Congress workers marched to Mr. Rajesh's official residence holding a cash counting machine and demanded his resignation. The same machine was used by the LDF in 2016 as a metaphor for liquor policy-related "corruption" in the United Democratic Front (UDF) government led by Oommen Chandy. The LDF's agitation then cost two UDF ministers their Cabinet berths, though the consequent anti-corruption inquiry came to nought.

The current controversy has therefore evoked a sense of political déjà vu. The UDF is all set to launch anti-government protests, would be reminiscent of the restive days of 2016.

Denying the accusations, the State government says it perceives a political plot to undermine the public's trust in the LDF's policymaking. The police have opened a probe to establish the motive for the FKHA's fundraising bid.

The FKHA has stated that it sought to raise funds from members to build an office in Thiruvananthapuram and not to bribe the government.

CPI(M) State Secretary M.V. Govindan has said that tweaking the liquor policy was not on the LDF's agenda. "Neither the government nor the party has broached the subject. The UDF is towing a conspiracist line," he said.

Kerala has one of the highest per capita alcohol consumption rates in the country. The liquor policy has always been a politically turbulent and socially sensitive subject. On the one hand, the Church and Muslim social organisations have always called for a puritanical liquor policy aimed at whittling alcohol availability and putting the State on a path to total prohibition.

On the other, the hospitality industry has demanded a more liberal approach. The software industry has long complained that the lack of socialising venues with alcohol in Kerala makes the State a disappointing job destination for techies. The government's recent decision to allow the sale of legal alcohol in designated areas in Information Technology parks has drawn criticism from powerful prohibitionist groups.

In order to balance the demands of the two groups, the government has so far walked a tightrope.

Kerala has grappled with the problem of alcohol abuse for years. Experts have attributed the State's relatively high suicide rate, domestic violence, street crimes, and divorce rate to substance abuse and addiction. Nevertheless, unreasonably restricting the availability of legal liquor for political reasons, like prohibition, has a proven history of failure globally. Kerala has been no exception. In 1997, for instance, the Congress government banned the sale of arrack. This spawned a liquor mafia that smuggled in spirit from neighbouring States.

The government can also ill afford to ignore fiscal realities. Tourism is a significant revenue earner for Kerala. The hospitality industry has argued that the "unreasonable restrictions" on liquor sales and bar timings have pushed MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) to other "tourist-friendly" destinations like Sri Lanka and Goa. The LDF government would do well to forge a political and social consensus before attempting to tweak the current liquor policy, if at all.

Many U.S. adults question worth of a college degree: survey

Student debt is mounting and the wages of non-degree holders are increasing

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

A recent report by the Pew Research Center sheds light on the evolving debate in the U.S. regarding the value of a college degree. As economic conditions are changing and the costs of higher education are rising, public opinion on the necessity and benefits of a college degree has become increasingly divided.

The report highlights a significant improvement in economic outcomes for young adults without a college degree. Over the past decade, the employment rates and median incomes of this group have seen a notable increase, narrowing the gap with their degree-holding peers. This trend is reshaping perceptions of the necessity of a college education for achieving economic stability.

At the same time, the cost of attending college continues to escalate. Tuition fees have surged, leading to greater financial burdens on students and their families. The increasing student debt has led many to question whether the long-term financial obligations of a college degree are justified by the potential economic benefits. This financial strain is a critical factor in the growing scepticism about the value of a degree.

Approximately half the respondents in the survey believe that a college education is worth the investment, citing better job prospects and higher earning potential **(Chart 1)**. However, a significant portion remains sceptical, pointing to successful careers attained without a college education as evidence that a degree is not always necessary for professional success.

The report identifies differences in opinion based on political affiliation and educational background. Democrats and people with higher levels of education are more likely to view college as essential for achieving success **(Chart 2)**. On the other hand, Republicans and those without a college degree are more inclined to question its value.

The evolving labour market also plays a critical role in shaping public attitudes toward college education. The increasing availability of well-paying jobs that do not require a college degree is influencing how people view the necessity of a degree. The growth of industries such as technology and skilled trades is providing alternative pathways to financial stability and career advancement, making college education seem less indispensable for some.

Chart 3 shows the median annual earnings of U.S. men aged 25-34, working full-time. Since 2014, earnings have risen for young men with some college education as well as for those with a high school diploma. **Chart 4** shows the same for young U.S. women. In the past 10 years, the earnings of women with a degree as well as the earnings of those without have risen.

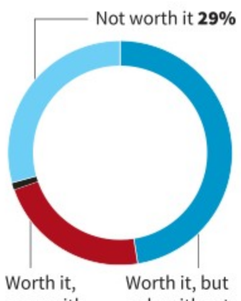
The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated perceptions of higher education. The shift to online learning during the pandemic, coupled with the economic downturn, has led many to reconsider the traditional college experience. Some respondents express concerns about the quality and value of online education compared to in-person learning. The pandemic has highlighted the need for flexibility and adaptability in higher education, as students and institutions navigated various challenges.

The report suggests that the future of higher education may involve more flexible pathways. Alternatives to traditional four-year college programmes, such as vocational training, apprenticeships, and certification programmes, are gaining traction as viable options for career development. These are more affordable and targeted ways of gaining the skills needed for the workforce and reflect a shift in how education and employment are connected.

Graduation blues

With economic outcomes improving for young adults without a degree, Americans are questioning the importance of a college education

Chart 1: % saying the cost of getting a four-year college degree today is …

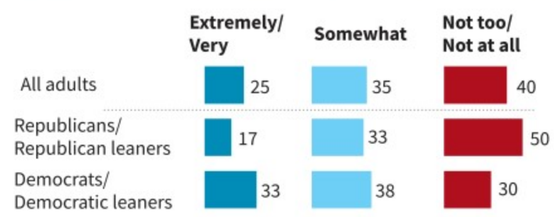


Only 22% of U.S. adults say the cost of college is worth it even if someone has to take a loan

Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer is shown but not labeled

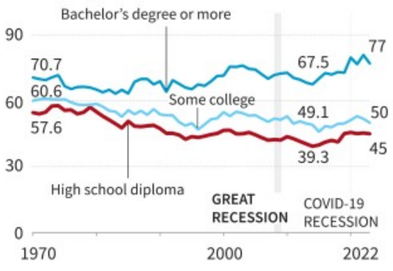
The data were sourced from the survey titled "Is College Worth It?" conducted by Pew Research Center

Chart 2
% saying it's ___ important for someone to have a four-year college degree in order to get a well-paying job in today's economy


Extremely/ Very
Somewhat
Not too/ Not at all
All adults 25 35 40
Republicans/ Republican leaners 17 33 50
Democrats/ Democratic leaners 33 38 30

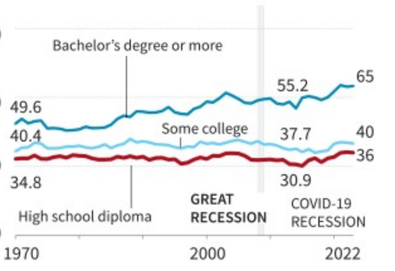
4 in 10 Americans say a college degree is not too important or not at all important in order to get a well-paying job

Chart 3: Median annual earnings of men aged 25 to 34 working full time all through 2022. Figures in %



Earnings of young men without a college degree have increased over the past 10 years

Chart 4: Median annual earnings of women aged 25 to 34 working full time all through 2022. Figures in %



Earnings of young women without a college degree have gone up in the past decade

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1974

U.S. plans review of programmes of aid to India

Washington, May 28: There are now indications that the United States, whose initial reaction to the Indian nuclear test was mild compared to the much harsher criticism voiced in the news media and sections of the Congress, is now engaged in deciding what, if any, further action it should take.

Reports purporting to originate from official sources here now suggest that the U.S. Administration has called for a high-level inter-agency review of all aid programmes to India (No food or economic aid has gone to India since 1971, though the aid budget includes a nominal sum of $75 millions for the next fiscal year. The International Development Association is another source from which India obtains U.S. money, but the U.S. Congress has yet to approve the contribution for this multilateral agency). The New York Times in fact quotes one U.S. official as saying that "If there is no cost to India for doing this (conducting a nuclear test), other countries too will go ahead." The implication of this remark, if it is true, is that if India does not stop further tests, the U.S. will cut off all forms of aid to India.

The initial U.S. reaction to the Indian test was carefully worded by the Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, who was at that time in West Asia. It merely said that the U.S. was opposed to all nuclear proliferation because of the impact it would have on world stability. Despite Pakistan's efforts, the Central Treaty Organisation's communique issued here last week also bore the mark of the absent Kissinger's call for restraint.

But since then, a traditionally friendly country like Canada, acting with unaccustomed sharpness, had suspended all aid to India's atomic programme, and placed under review all other forms of aid.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1924

The prickly pear pest

Lands with approximately 40,000,000 acres in Queensland and about 6,000,000 in New South Wales, are invaded by prickly pear. Cockmeal insects have been imported from Ceylon and Northern India to check the plague. Various methods have been adopted to control the plants spread including its use as cattle fodder – as material for paper pulp making and alcohol production.

From Page One

31 killed as rain wreaks havoc in northeast

"We have earmarked ₹15 crore to tackle disasters triggered by the rains induced by the cyclone," he said.

The State's Home Minister, K. Sapdanga, said fiscal relief would not be provided to the family members of at least four non-local people who died at the stone quarry. He also said the government ordered the closure of all educational institutions and government offices barring those rendering essential services.

Apart from three deaths, storms in 14 districts of Assam left 17 injured. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, a tree branch fell on a school bus in Sonitpur district's Dhekiajuli, injuring 12 students. Five others were injured in different incidents in Morigaon.

The Meghalaya State Disaster Management Authority said four persons were injured in a landslide in the East Khasi Hills district.

The India Meteorological Department had issued a red alert for eight districts in Assam, four in Meghalaya, and three in Tripura. The rainfall over the last 48 hours provided respite from heatwave-like conditions across the region last week, with temperatures crossing the 40-degree mark.

SC tells Kejriwal to move CJI for bail extension

"We cannot do anything," Justice Maheshwari addressed the senior counsel.

Mr. Singhvi submitted that the application was made on medical grounds and did not amount to an abuse of liberty.

In his application seeking an extension of time by a week, Mr. Kejriwal had said he had to undergo a series of medical tests, including a PET-CT scan.

The Bench asked then why the plea was not made before Justice Datta, who was heading a Vacation Bench last week.

The Supreme Court granted Mr. Kejriwal interim bail on May 10 to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. Mr. Kejriwal was ordered to surrender on June 2.

The court had barred Mr. Kejriwal from visiting the Chief Minister's office or the Delhi Secretariat. He was ordered not to sign any official files unless it was required and necessary for obtaining clearance or approval of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. He was also prohibited from making any comments with regard to his role in the liquor policy case.

Court acquits Dera chief in murder case

According to the CBI chargesheet earlier, the Dera chief believed that Ranjit Singh was behind the circulation of the anonymous letter and hatched a conspiracy to kill him. The CBI court had held Ram Rahim guilty of hatching a criminal conspiracy with his co-accused.

The Dera chief's lawyer, Jitender Khurana said a Division Bench of Justices Sureshwar Thakur and Lalit Batra pronounced the decision on Tuesday on the appeals filed by Ram Rahim and four others.

In 2017, Ram Rahim was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for raping two disciples, after which he was lodged in Rohtak's Sunaria jail.

The Dera chief and three others were also convicted in 2019 for the murder of a journalist more than 16 years ago.

Sandeshkhali attack: CBI files chargesheet

In April, the CBI seized several arms and ammunition from two premises in Sandeshkhali in the case related to the attack on ED officials.

A few days ago, the ED had attached assets worth ₹14.28 crore belonging to Mr. Shahjahan, his brother, Sekh Sumaia Hafizia Trust (represented by Mr. Alomgir), Abdul Alim Molla, Shib Prasad Hazra and other associates. These included 17 bank accounts with a balance of about ₹3.78 crore and 55 immovable assets, involving 38.90 bighas of land worth ₹10.50 crore.

The ED investigation was based on 13 first information reports (FIR) registered by the West Bengal Police under various provisions of the IPC and the Arms Act against Mr. Shahjahan and others. They were accused of creating an atmosphere of terror by indulging in organised crime of issuing threats of injury, murder, attempt to murder, extortion, land grabbing, and also obtaining illegal monetary gains/benefits.

The ED alleged that Mr. Shahjahan had created a "criminal empire" by indulging in land grabbing, illegal fish farming/trading, cartelisation of contracts, and collection of illegal levies.

Sandeshkhali has been on the boil for the past few months after local women accused Mr. Shahjahan and his associates of land grabbing and sexual abuse.

On March 5, the ED attached properties valued at about ₹12.78 crore linked to Mr. Shahjahan. The total attachments in the case are worth about ₹27 crore, while the "proceeds of crime" are so far estimated to be ₹288.20 crore. All the accused are now in judicial custody.

Rajkot fire: Cong. calls for judicial oversight of probe

State govt. 'not serious' about taking action in case, says Gujarat Congress chief Shaktisinh Gohil; he urges the Prime Minister to visit Rajkot and meet the families of the victims to share their grief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday demanded an investigation under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Supreme Court or the High Court into the fire at the Rajkot game zone that left more than 30 people dead.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, Gujarat Congress chief Shaktisinh Gohil said the BJP government in the State was "not serious" about taking action in the case. He urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Rajkot and meet the families of the victims to share their grief.

More than 30 people, many of them children, were killed in the fire at the gaming centre on May 25. The State government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT). The bodies charred beyond recognition are being identified through DNA profiling.

Rapid fire: Gujarat Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil at a press meet at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

"Prime Minister Modi should take a break from campaigning and meet the families affected by this incident in Rajkot and share their grief," Mr. Gohil said.

Hitting out at the State government, Mr. Gohil alleged that safety rules such as separate entry and exit routes and distance from residential areas were not followed in the game zone.

"Even after such a horrific accident in Rajkot, the government is not serious. It is the responsibility of the government to protect the lives and property of the people, but today the government itself is playing with it. When top officials themselves had been visiting this game zone, then what is the government trying to prove by suspending the junior official," Mr. Gohil said.

'Undue prominence'

The Congress leader said that in Gujarat, the officers who "flatter" the government had been given prominence.

"The situation is such that in Gujarat, good officers are being sidelined and their careers are being ruined. The result is accidents such as the one in Rajkot," he said.

He also recalled that 22 children had lost their lives at an educational institute in Surat earlier.

"Similarly, 14 children lost their lives when a boat sank in Vadodara. No action was taken in that case either. Many people lost their lives due to the collapse of the bridge in Banaskantha. The company which was building this bridge was blacklisted earlier as well, but as soon as it donated money to the BJP, it got the work of building this bridge," he alleged.

"There should be a complete investigation under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Supreme Court or High Court," Mr. Gohil said.

The Congress leader also hailed the Gujarat High Court for coming down heavily on the Rajkot civic body over the game zone fire.

Student beaten to death on law college campus in Patna

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

A final year student was lynched on a law college campus here by more than 10 unidentified people using hockey sticks, iron rods, bricks and sticks in the Sultanganj police station limits on Monday.

The deceased, Harsh Raj, is an undergraduate student of the Functional English Vocational course in B.N. College. According to the police, as soon as he came out after taking the exams, more than 10 people attacked him near the auditorium of the law college campus in which the 22-year-old student received a major head injury. He was taken to the Patna Medical College and Hospital where he was declared dead.

The deceased was a resident of Vaishali district and was staying in a rented house in the Boring Canal Road locality.

City Superintendent of Police (East), Patna, Bharat Soni on Tuesday said the main accused Chandan Yadav has been arrested.

"We have arrested Chandan Yadav, the main accused in the case. We have also identified the others who were involved in the crime. Continuous searches are being conducted by the Special Investigation Team to catch the absconders. We will not spare anyone in the case," said Mr. Soni.

Protest march

Several student organisations staged a protest march in Patna against the killing of the student and demanded capital punishment for the culprits.

Requesting anonymity, one of his friends said the possible reason for the lynching could be the decision to contest the Patna University Students' Union (PUSU) election scheduled later this year. Harsh Raj was very active in the social cause as well and used to run an organisation called the Lok Nayak Yuva Parishad.

Patna University Vice-Chancellor Professor K.C. Sinha expressed grief over the incident and announced cancellation of all the ongoing examinations till further notice.

Meitei civil society organisations raise questions over 'targeted attacks' in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Civil society organisations representing the Meitei community on Tuesday raised questions about alleged targeted attacks against the community during the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur.

The Delhi Meitei Coordinating Committee (DMCC), along with allied civil society organisations from the Manipur capital Imphal that included groups of Meira Paibis (women activists), held a press conference at the Press Club of India in New Delhi.

The organisations recalled the attacks on 13 Meitei villages on May 28 last year, hours before Union Home Minister Amit Shah was to visit the State.

The ethnic conflict between the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kuki-Zo communities began on May 3 last year.

More than 220 people have been killed in the conflict so far, thousands injured, and at least 50,000 people internally displaced.

The DMCC, in a statement, said the attacks on the villages in Imphal East and Bishnupur districts began in the early hours of May 28, 2023. Twelve Meitei people, two Kuki-Zo people, and two State forces personnel were killed in the attacks, it said.

Seram Rojesh, convener of the DMCC, said the attacks were carried out even as the Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Pande, and the then Eastern Command chief, Lieutenant-General R.P. Kalita, were in Imphal just ahead of Mr. Shah's visit to the State at the time.

State of unrest: Tyres and construction material set on fire amid the ethnic violence in Manipur in June 2023. PTI

He added that several such attacks had taken places on Meitei villages and outposts of Manipur Police personnel and State forces despite public statements by top Assam Rifles officers promising action.

"Now, Meitei communities are asking if this is not a sign of siding with the Kuki militants, then what else?" the organisations said in the statement.

Such accusations have been made by the warring communities throughout the conflict. While the Kuki-Zo people have alleged that the Manipur Police personnel and State forces were complicit in the attacks against them, the Meitei community has repeatedly accused the Central forces of taking sides in the conflict.

The civil society organisations in Delhi questioned why the violence in the State had been allowed to continue for this long, who should be held responsible for controlling the "civil war" like situation, and why Meiteis had been selectively targeted by both the State and Central governments.

India offers $1-million aid to Papua New Guinea

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Government of India has granted $1 million as immediate assistance for Papua New Guinea, which has been hit by a devastating flood and landslip that has so far killed 2,000 people.

"As a close friend and partner under the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) and as a gesture of solidarity with the friendly people of Papua New Guinea, Government of India extends an immediate relief assistance of $1 million to support relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts," said the Ministry of External Affairs in a press statement.

Cong. leader kicks up row by comment on 1962 war

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar triggered another controversy on Tuesday by referring to the 1962 Indo-China war as an "alleged Chinese invasion".

He made the remarks during a book release event.

Mr. Aiyar was quick to amend his statement and "unreservedly" apologised for "mistakenly" using the word "alleged" for the 1962 event.

At the book launch, Mr. Aiyar said, "In October 1962, the Chinese allegedly invaded India."

When a member in the audience questioned his usage of the word "allegedly" to qualify the 1962 attack, Mr. Aiyar sought to amend his stance and apologised for using this word.

Several BJP leaders, since Mr. Aiyar's comments, has attacked the Congress which in turn has distanced itself from Mr. Aiyar's statement.

Pune car case: Minister, MLA pressured doctors, alleges Cong., wants Fadnavis to quit

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

The party's allegation comes a day after the police arrested three for destroying blood samples of accused

The Maharashtra Congress on Tuesday demanded the resignation of Home Minister Devendra Fadnavis over the Pune luxury car crash case while alleging that a Minister and an MLA of the ruling Mahayuti government had 'pressured' doctors at the city's Sassoon Hospital to manipulate the blood samples of the 17-year-old whose reckless driving had resulted in the two deaths.

Speaking to pressperson in Mumbai, State Congress president Nana Patole demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the matter saying that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde ought to come clear in a case that is becoming murkier. He alleged that the son of a ruling party MLA was with the accused in the car on the night of the accident on May 19.

"The information that we possess is the second person [along with the accused teenager] was an MLA's son. Many things are hidden in this case. Who is the Minister and the MLA who pressured Dr. Ajay Taware (head of Sassoon General Hospital's Forensic Medicine Department) to change the samples of the accused?" Mr. Patole charged.

The Congress's allegations come a day after the Pune police team investigating the case arrested Dr. Tavare along with Dr. Shrihari Halnor, chief medical officer of Sassoon, along with another staffer Atul Ghatkamble for replacing the blood samples of the accused with that of another person in the aftermath of the accident. The police revealed that the doctors had accepted money from the family of the accused juvenile as bribes for the illegal act.

Mr. Patole said Mr. Fadnavis had reportedly used his own training as a lawyer to save the accused. The State Congress chief targeted NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who is the Guardian Minister of Pune district, for allegedly 'shielding' those involved in the case.

"Illegal pubs are rampant in Pune and Nagpur. After the luxury car crash case, 36 illegal pubs in Pune had to be demolished by authorities. Earlier, in Nagpur, two girls from wealthy families had mowed down two youth in a case of drunken driving. They got bail within 10 hours. In Jalgaon, too, a similar case was reported and an attempt was made to save the accused," said the State Congress chief.

"CM Shinde must come forward and demand Mr. Fadnavis's resignation. He must acknowledge how the BJP has tried to destroy the youth by advocating a rampant pub culture," Mr. Patole said.

Bomb hoax at Delhi airport triggers panic

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Panic gripped the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi when a Varanasi-bound flight received a bomb threat on Tuesday morning. After investigation, the police declared that it was a hoax.

In a video that went viral on social media, the pilot of the IndiGo flight was seen sliding out of the aircraft using the emergency slides. An elderly passenger was seen being helped out of the emergency exit by the crew. A total of 176 passengers, who had boarded the flight, were safely evacuated. The police said that they had received information about a piece of paper found inside the toilet of the flight with the words "bomb @5.30 a.m." written on it. A security inspection with bomb disposal teams followed and the threat was found to be a hoax.

A passenger of the IndiGo flight being evacuated through the emergency exit. ANI

APPEAL

12 years old **Vaishnavi** is suffering from Ph positive B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia - High Risk. She is required to undergo Haplo identical Bone Marrow Transplantation at **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research** Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is **Rs. 20,00,000/-**. Her family is very poor and cannot afford this huge cost. Please help her to have a bright future. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged**. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & Google Pay (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C. No:60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324/ 7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

WWS

ELECTIONS 2024

Nitish may take a big decision after June 4: RJD

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could take another "big decision after June 4 to save his party".

"After June 4, our uncle can take any big decision. He can do anything to save his party and the politics of backward classes", Mr. Yadav told presspersons in Patna, hinting that Mr. Kumar might take a U-turn after the Lok Sabha election results are declared on June 4.

Mr. Kumar, however at a meeting in Nalanda, said that he would not go anywhere from the National Democratic Alliance now. In January, Mr. Kumar came out of the *mahagathbandhan* alliance with the Congress and the RJD. He later joined hands with the BJP-led NDA.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav made the remark in Patna. ANI

Shah intensifies attack on Odisha CM, his aide

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday intensified his tirade against Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and his close aide V.K. Pandian raking up the issue of "*Odia Asmita*" (Odia Pride) again.

"The people of Odisha valiantly fought against Emperor Asoka for their pride, sacrificing many lives, yet they never bowed down. However, the current Odisha Chief Minister is attempting to impose a Tamil Chief Minister on us. We have endured much under your [Mr. Patnaik's] leadership, but we cannot accept this bureaucrat in your name," Mr. Shah said, addressing a public meeting at Chandbali.

"I assure you that if the BJP gets a majority, we will ensure a son or daughter of the soil becomes the next [Chief Minister]," he said.

> The Opposition is spreading falsehood on inflation. They say inflation has increased during BJP rule. PM has, to a large extent, controlled inflation
>
> **RAJNATH SINGH**
> Defence Minister

Thakur targets Priyanka at Himachal rally

Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday accused Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of being silent on harassment of women in States ruled by her party and its allies. At election meetings in Hamirpur, he alleged that Ms. Vadra had come to Himachal Pradesh to deceive people. PTI

> There is a lot of anger against them [the BJP] especially over issues of inflation and unemployment... People think that PM will give some solutions
>
> **ARVIND KEJRIWAL**
> Delhi Chief Minister

Voicing concerns: A villager carrying drinking water collected from a public tap at Pahadpur village in Odisha. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Pride aside, development is the poll agenda in Mayurbhanj

Satyasundar Barik
RAIRANGPUR (ODISHA)

A well-laid concrete road, an eye-care centre, an under-construction stadium, a skill training centre, 5G Internet connectivity and streetlights give Pahadpur in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha an urban feel. The once nondescript village is the home of the in-laws of President Droupadi Murmu.

In contrast, Surath Nagar, a village 30 km away, does not have an all-weather road connecting the National Highway. The pathway, local people say, symbolises how the tribal community is torn between the pride of seeing Ms. Murmu as the President and the struggle for development.

Naba Charan Majhi, a close associate of Ms. Murmu, has been fielded by the BJP from the Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha constituency, while State Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi is the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate. They are being challenged by Anjali Murmu, daughter of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha patriarch Shibu Soren.

Ms. Murmu has been one of the most talked about poll themes in her home district Mayurbhanj, which will vote on June 1.

In 2022, the BJP-led government went all out during the Presidential election. The party positioned itself as a champion of tribal rights and the move was expected to benefit the party in the closely contested elections in Odisha. However, the euphoria had long been replaced by a chorus for practical needs.

"Although the government swiftly electrified Uparbeda, Ms. Murmu's village, within hours of her nomination in 2022, the broader approach to development in this tribal heartland remains uneven. While Ms. Murmu's in-law's village may have an urban look, the tribal population in this forested district continues to lag in most development indices," said Paresh Chandra Soren, a resident of Nischintpur in the Kusumi block.

In Surath Nagar, Sibnath Sirka said he has spent two decades pursuing officials to lay a concrete road connecting his village to the highway. In Pahadpur, Muniram Murmu, a construction worker, said he faces challenges in getting access to livelihood needs. "The President belongs to our own clan. No doubt our village has improved. But our agricultural lands remain unirrigated," he said.

In 2019, Mayurbhanj sent six BJP MLAs to the Odisha Legislative Assembly. While people take pride in Ms. Murmu being the President, voters are scrutinising the performance of BJP MLAs. They said they would vote for candidates who would get their work done.

The Mayurbhanj seat is currently being held by Bisheswar Tudu, the Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs. Though the BJP holds the Lok Sabha seat and six Assembly constituencies, the BJD dominates the three-tier panchayati raj system.

Whatever the political equation, tribals in Mayurbhanj have become more assertive. As Bhagaban Hembram, a voter, put it, "Leaders always talk about the subsidised rice being provided to the tribal communities. We are not destined to live our lives consuming free rice. We aspire to be able to afford rice priced at ₹100 a kg. When that becomes a reality, it will signify true development and empowerment for tribals."

All eyes on the Santhal region of Jharkhand during last phase

Godda, Rajmahal and Dumka Lok Sabha constituencies will go to the polls on June 1; JMM founder Shibu Soren's daughter-in-law Sita Soren is in the fray as a candidate of the BJP, which won two of the three seats in the 2019 election

OVERVIEW

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

In the last phase of polling for the Lok Sabha election, all eyes have now shifted to the Santhal region in Jharkhand where voting will take place for the Lok Sabha constituencies of Dumka, Rajmahal and Godda.

Sixteen of the 18 constituencies in six districts – Deoghar, Godda, Sahebganj, Pakur, Dumka and Jamtara – are bracketed as Santhal Pargana. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will be trying to retain its two seats.

The party won Godda and Dumka seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, whereas it lost Rajmahal seat to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM).

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 12 out of 14 Lok Sabha seats in Jharkhand, but later that year, the BJP won just four Assembly seats out of 18 in Santhal Pargana in the Assembly election.

Prestige battle

The BJP's prestige is at stake as JMM founder Shibu Soren's eldest daughter-in-law, Sita Soren, who quit the party a month before the Lok Sabha election and joined the BJP, is contesting as the saffron party candidate from Dumka.

Dumka consists of six Assembly segments – Jamtara, Sikaripara, Nala, Dumka, Jama and Sarath. This seat is associated with the JMM as Mr. Soren has represented it six times after winning it for the first time in 1989.

At present, this seat is represented by Sunil Soren, who has been dropped by the BJP for this election.

Basant Soren, the younger brother of the former Chief Minister of Jharkhand Hemant Soren, who is in jail in an alleged land scam case, is the legislator from Dumka. JMM MLA from the Nala segment Rabindra Nath Mahato is the Speaker of the Assembly and this gives the party an edge.

Nalin Soren, seven-time MLA of the Sikaripara Assembly seat, is up against Ms. Sita Soren. This seat is also important for the BJP because its State president Babulal Marandi has represented this segment twice.

In Godda, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey is locked in a direct contest against Congress candidate Pradeep Yadav.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Mr. Dubey got the lead in all six Assembly segments – Jarmundi, Madhupur, Deoghar, Poreyahat, Godda and Mahagama. In the previous Lok Sabha election, Mr. Yadav had contested the seat on Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) ticket.

Mr. Dubey is a three-term MP and first won the seat in 2009.

The Godda seat has a sizeable number of Muslim voters followed by Brahmins, Yadavs, and tribal people. Out of the six Assembly segments, four are occupied by the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc, while the BJP has two in Deoghar and Godda.

Independent candidate

Abhishek Jha, grandson of former Bihar Chief Minister Vinodanand Jha, is also in the fray as an Independent candidate and may dent Brahmin votes that could otherwise go to Mr. Dubey because he has a good hold among the members of the Panda community.

Mr. Dubey is seeking votes claiming that upon his request, an airport and a unit of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) was constructed in Deoghar, apart from the extension of a railway line.

On the other hand, the Rajmahal seat, reserved for the Scheduled Tribes (ST), is now occupied by the JMM where the party has fielded sitting MP Vijay Hansdak, who is up against BJP candidate Tala Marandi. It has turned into a triangular contest after Lobin Hembrom, a rebel JMM MLA who represents the Borio Assembly seat, jumped into the contest as an Independent candidate.

Two more candidates for the seat have raised serious questions over the fate of the JMM's fortunes in the Rajmahal constituency, which has six Assembly segments – Borio, Barhait, Litipara, Pakur, Maheshpur, and Rajmahal.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has fielded Gopen Soren as its candidate whereas the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has fielded Paul Soren, who could dent the Muslim vote bank.

The JMM is also facing difficulties after the arrest of the Congress MLA from Pakur and Minister in the Jharkhand government Alamgir Alam. Mr. Alam had a sway over the the Muslim vote bank.

Past results

A look at the 2019 Lok Sabha election winners and runners-up for the three seats from Jharkhand going to the polls on June 1, along with their vote shares

Constituency	Winner	Vote share (%)	Runner-up	Vote share (%)
Dumka	Bharatiya Janata Party	47.3	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	42.6
Godda	Bharatiya Janata Party	53.4	Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik)	37.9
Rajmahal	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	48.5	Bharatiya Janata Party	39

Campaign spree: JMM leader Kalpana Soren at the election rally for Rajmahal Lok Sabha constituency candidate Vijay Kumar Hansdak. PTI

The BJP had won Godda and Dumka seats in 2019 while the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha won the Rajmahal seat

Mizoram MP urges EC to let policemen away on poll duty vote

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Mizoram MP has written to the Election Commission (EC) seeking its intervention to allow 1,047 police personnel from the State to vote as they were away on election-related duties in other States. The polling for the lone Lok Sabha seat in the State was held on April 19.

K. Vanlalvena, Rajya Sabha member, said in a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner that currently 15 companies of the Mizoram Armed Police comprising 1,047 personnel were on election duty in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. He said the State police nodal officer had requested the Chief Electoral Officer, Mizoram to make arrangements for voting, but they were informed that the request could not be processed for "technical reasons."

"Whatever the technical reasons may be, the fact of the matter is that 1,047 citizens of India have been denied their legitimate right to exercise their franchise. Such disenfranchisement of legitimate voters is totally unconstitutional. It is indeed unfortunate and ironic that this injustice has been served upon these Mizoram police personnel due to their deployment on election duty. Denial of voting opportunity to a voter simply on technical grounds is totally unacceptable," he said.

EC orders suspension of Special Secretary to Odisha Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The Election Commission has placed D.S. Kutey, Special Secretary to Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, under suspension, and directed Ashish Kumar Singh, Inspector-General of Police (CM Security) to undergo medical examination over charges of influencing the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the State.

The two senior IPS officers were among a few key bureaucrats overseeing official operation of Odisha Chief Minister. The decision has been taken on basis of information forwarded by the Chief Electoral Officer of Odisha who indicated that the two officers were directly exerting "undue influence" on conduct of election work.

"This was further corroborated by various other inputs received from the field from time to time," the EC said in its order.

"Mr. Kutey should be placed under suspension under relevant service rules for unduly interfering in conduct of election. His headquarter is fixed at the Office of Resident Commissioner Odisha, New Delhi where he will report by 3 p.m. on May 29," the order says.

The shifting of Mr. Kutey is seen as significant step as the BJP had alleged that he was directly involved in election management for the Biju Janata Dal.

Mr. Singh, who has been on medical leave since May 4, should present himself for detailed medical exam, no later than May 30, the order said.

According to order, the Odisha CEO would ensure that the Director of AIIMS, Bhubaneshwar constituted a special medical board to ascertain the illness and treatment being undergone.

"Report on this shall reach the commission latest by May 31," it said.

Close electoral contest on the cards in Odisha's six Lok Sabha constituencies

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The four-phase election in Odisha has entered the final stage with six Lok Sabha seats, mostly in the coastal region, going to the polls on June 1.

The Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha constituencies and 42 Assembly seats may witness a close contest this time.

While 66 candidates are in the fray for the Lok Sabha election, 394 are contesting the Assembly election. In total, 99,43,370 electors will exercise their voting right.

Former Union Ministers Srikant Jena and Pratap Sarangi, BJP national vice-president Baijayant Panda and senior Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Rajashree Mallick are involved in intense campaigning to win their respective seats.

In the Assembly election, BJP State president Manmohan Samal, former Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik, State Ministers Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, Pratap Deb and Pritiranjan Ghadai and Speaker of the Odisha Assembly Pramila Mallick are in the fray.

Sensing an opportunity to better the BJP's dismal performance in the State in 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other senior BJP leaders are criss-crossing the coastal region to give one last push to the party's campaign.

This phase is crucial for the BJD, which achieved a sweeping victory in the Assembly election in 2019 and secured a majority in the State Assembly. Facing an anti-incumbency sentiment after being in power for 25 years, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, along with his aide V. K. Pandian, has intensified the campaign by touring various parts of the constituencies.

The Balasore Lok Sabha constituency is set to witness a triangular contest with the Congress's Srikant Jena, the BJP's Pratap Sarangi and the BJD's Lekhashree Samantsinghar mounting fierce campaigns.

The electoral fight in Mayurbhanj constituency is expected to be tough for the BJP. The party is facing a herculean task to repeat its 2019 success when it won the Mayurbhanj and the six Assembly constituencies in its limits.

Battle royale: Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a public meeting in Bhadrak on Tuesday, right, Odisha Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik during a meeting in Kendrapara on Monday. PTI

INBRIEF

Former Haryana CM accuses Congress of bogus voting

Former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Tuesday accused the Congress of indulging in bogus voting at few places in the State during the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha election on May 25. At a press conference here after his party's review meeting a day earlier, Mr. Lal alleged that the Congress workers at some places were found indulging in bogus voting, especially in the Rohtak and Sirsa Lok Sabha constituencies, and efforts were made to prevent it strictly. He said the authorities were informed "verbally", but the time to challenge it had lapsed. "Bogus voting is something that needs to be dealt with on the spot," he said.

Rahul speaks to Dalit victim's kin in Sagar; CM to visit today

Two days after a 23-year-old Dalit victim of sexual harassment died after falling from an ambulance in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar, her brother said on Tuesday that the family had lost everything but would continue its fight for justice. His 18-year-old brother was beaten to death in August 2023 by some men when he did not agree to "settle" a harassment case filed against them by his sister. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi spoke to the victim's family over the phone on Tuesday and promised his party's support. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will visit the family on Wednesday.

Battle for the heart of the 'eternal city'

All eyes turn to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh in the final phase of the election as Prime Minister Narendra Modi targets a third straight term as MP for the seat which he chose as a launchpad to national politics in 2014; Congress's Ajay Rai takes 'migrant' narrative to counter the PM's popularity

Mayank Kumar
VARANASI

Grand finale: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with senior BJP leaders after filing his nomination from Varanasi on May 14 and, right, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav with other INDIA leaders at a rally in Varanasi on Tuesday. GETTY IMAGES/PTI

For Sudhir Maurya, it was the third consecutive Lok Sabha election campaign trip to Varanasi in the past 10 years.

Mr. Maurya, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) worker from Prayagraj, said: "I am dedicating my two weeks to make sure the margin of victory crosses those of the previous two elections and Kashi creates a record not only in U.P. but in entire India."

He was among thousands of saffron party leaders and workers who thronged the holy city of Varanasi, also known as Kashi, considered by many as Hinduism's holiest city.

Varanasi is one of the most important among the total of 543 Lok Sabha constituencies with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi aiming for a third consecutive victory since choosing it as a launchpad in 2014 as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP. The constituency is going to the polls on June 1 in the final phase. The BJP is eyeing a record margin of victory with workers and leaders from different parts of Uttar Pradesh and some from other parts of India campaigning extensively for Mr. Modi with *karyakartas* (workers) in their door-to-door outreach highlighting what they describe as an unprecedented transformation of Kashi and asking voters to send a positive message in the likely third term of Mr. Modi.

The pamphlets circulated by the BJP workers highlight initiatives such as the recent unveiling of a ropeway project that will revolutionise travel within the city, inauguration of the Banas Kashi Sankul milk processing unit, various infrastructure work at UPSIDA Agro Park, a silk fabric printing common facility and the foundation stone for a National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). "The city has been transformed; Modi*ji* promised to further change the face of the entire region of Purvanchal in the next five years whose epicentre is Varanasi," said Mahendra Pandey, a local BJP leader. In 2019, Mr. Modi polled 6,74,664 votes, which is roughly 63% of the total votes polled, as his nearest rival Shalini Yadav of the Samajwadi Party (SP) secured 1,95,159 votes.

Ajay Rai, the present Opposition INDIA bloc candidate who contested as a Congress candidate then, polled 1,52,548 votes. In 2014, he came third polling 75,614 votes.

Local roots

Mr. Rai, who is also the Uttar Pradesh Congress president, is continuously campaigning in the constituency this time, highlighting his local roots while pushing the 'migrant' or 'outsider' narrative, claiming that only if the 'outsider' is shown the door would the 'Ganga-Jamuni culture of Kashi' be saved. He said that this time, the people have made up their mind to remove the 'outsider'.

"Every Kashi resident now has only one slogan – remove the migrant, save Kashi," reads a hoarding of the Congress at Bhojubeer Chauraha. "Modi*ji* writes letters to 2,000 people of Varanasi asking for votes. When thousands of people died during the coronavirus period, why did Modi*ji* not send a letter of condolence," asked Mr. Rai in one of his public meetings.

"In the Assi Ghat, the carcass of a cow is openly floating in the Ganga. There is no one to take care of it. Did *Maa Ganga* call him here to see such days," added the Congress candidate in another meeting. Mr. Rai, a five-time MLA, claims that only a son of the soil can understand the needs of Varanasi.

Uphill task

Facing an uphill task, the Congress candidate got many top Opposition leaders including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and SP president Akhilesh Yadav to hold a joint meeting and former Congress U.P. in-charge Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Mainpuri MP Dimple Yadav to hold roadshows, with all the leaders alleging that the transformation has brought destruction in Varanasi with old heritage buildings lost forever.

In Varanasi, Muslims constitute roughly 14% of the electorate, Brahmins are considered to be around 10%, the Yadav community is nearly 8%, and the Bhumihar community from which Mr. Rai hails is believed to be around 5%.

Modi to meditate at Vivekananda memorial

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meditate at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanniyakumari following the end of campaigning for the Lok Sabha election on Thursday.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office said Mr. Modi will arrive at the rock memorial – which was the place where Swami Vivekananda is said to have meditated and was visited by the vision of "Bharat Mata" – on May 30, the day campaigning for the last phase of the election ends. Sources said Mr. Modi's choice included a message of affection for Tamil Nadu, where he has invested heavily his political capital during this election.

The visit is reminiscent of his visit to Kedarnath at the end of the 2019 election, and to Pratapgarh at the end of the 2014 polls.

Modi and Mamata battle it out in Kolkata in the last phase of polls

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal CM and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee dances with artists during a roadshow in Kolkata on Tuesday. PTI

Two days before the conclusion of the campaign for the Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minster Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday held roadshows in Kolkata and adjoining areas.

While the Prime Minster rode an open vehicle for about three kilometres from the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the Shyambazar area to the ancestral house of Swami Vivekananda in Shimla Street, the West Bengal Chief Minister walked nearly nine kilometres in support of the Trinamool Congress candidates in Dum Dum and Kolkata.

Thousands of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supporters gathered on both sides of roads in Kolkata North when the convoy of the Prime Minister along with the BJP candidate from the constituency, Tapas Roy, and party leaders Suvendu Adhikari and Sukanta Majumdar passed through the area. The route was almost similar to the procession taken out by a section of Hindu monks on May 24, targeting Ms. Banerjee for her remarks directed at a section of them.

"The court has exposed the treachery of the Trinamool Congress with the OBCs. The party snatched the rights of OBC youth to support its appeasement politics and 'vote jihad'," the Prime Minister said at a public meeting at Barasat, referring to an order passed by the Calcutta High Court setting aside reservation for 77 castes of Muslims in the OBC category.

Ms. Banerjee had said that her government would challenge the order before higher courts.

Mr. Modi, while pointing out at the remarks of Trinamool leaders, said that the party was trying to "stifle the voice of the judiciary". Mr. Modi heaped praises on party's Sandeshkhali BJP candidate Rekha Patra, lauded her courage to stand against the Trinamool, and said that she made an excellent speech at the rally.

'Corrupt ecosystem'

At a rally in Jadavpur, Mr. Modi accused the Trinamool of promoting a corrupt ecosystem. "The Trinamool and good governance have no relation. You won't find good governance in Bengal even under a microscope," he said.

The Chief Minister said that in the next few days, Mr. Modi would become a "former PM". At an election rally at Behala, she accused Mr. Modi of "spreading lies" about the rescue efforts following Cyclone Remal. It was her government that came to the rescue of the people in the coastal areas, she added.

Election Commission releases absolute number of votes polled in Phase 6

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Women after casting their votes for the sixth phase of the election in Nuh district in Haryana on May 25. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday came out with the absolute number of votes polled in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha election and the final turnout, which it pegged at 63.37%.

The absolute number of voters was released just three days after the voting for the sixth phase took place on May 25, while the numbers for the first five phases were released by the poll body 36 days after the first phase.

The highest turnout for the sixth phase was recorded in West Bengal at 82.71%, while the lowest of 55.4% was recorded in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the turnout for J&K was the highest in 30 years.

The total number of votes polled was 7,05,44,933 in 58 constituencies as against the total registered electors of 11,13,16,606, the EC said in a statement.

The EC had shared the absolute polling figures for the first time on May 25, a day after the Supreme Court refused to direct the poll body to disclose details of Form 17 C, which contains this data at the booth level and is handed out to all the polling agents of the candidates.

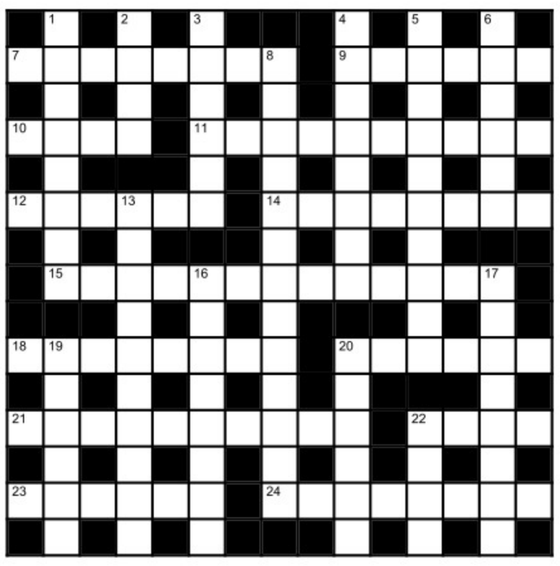
In an affidavit filed before the top court last week, the commission expressed concern that there was a "design, a pattern" that was at play in the petitioners' approach. In its statement on May 25, the EC reiterated this. "The commission notes the pattern of false narratives and mischievous design to vitiate electoral process", it said adding any alteration in the number of the votes polled was not possible.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD + 14187

(set by Hypatia)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

7 Leave, hide and cry - that's disgusting (8)
9 Stoppage of work in Bihar taluk (6)
10 Extremely unyielding lady's discontented and nasty (4)
11 Soldiers unable to switch position before junction in barracks (10)
12 Jerks in movies (6)
14 Destroy data if in revolt (8)
15 Senior support staff? (7,6)
18 Extremely healthy female always has an allergic reaction (3-5)
20 Determine appropriate commission to lie for Spooner (3,3)
21 Dropping a Tesla, carelessly top up later with representative in filling station (6,4)
22 Cross a smuggler (4)
23 Long snake concerned about biting first person (6)
24 Revolutionary design in Wordle's somewhat overwhelming (8)

Down

1 Roll with girl at old woman's house (8)
2 Dodge love for acting in drama (4)
3 Doctors question boy left by sponsors (6)
4 Electrical instrument tripping hot toaster (8)
5 Particular about one's afternoon dress, at first sight (5,5)
6 Fellow appeared to leave leader flattered (6)
8 Thin gun for a spot of shooting? (7,6)
13 State of wind in a frolic close to sea (10)
16 At home, veterans basically loved building complex (8)
17 Air surrounding mountain in capital city (8)
19 One discriminating argued in site from time to time (6)
20 Is this device producing hypnosis (6)
22 Mendicant or noble Karmapa, basically! (4)

SUDOKU

				6	9			
	3			4				9
			3		7	6		5
							1	6
6	7		9		5		3	2
4	9							
3		7	2		4			
2				1			6	
			7	5				

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

P	O	P	U	L	A	C	E		B	I	C	A	R	B
L		R		O		O		C		N		C		I
U	N	I	F	O	R	M		O	L	D	S	T	E	R
N		E		K		M		U		U		I		D
G	U	S	T	S		O	U	R	S	E	L	V	E	S
E		T		I		N		S				A		E
			I	N	C	O	H	E	R	E	N	T	L	Y
S		C		T		R		O		A		E		E
T	H	O	R	O	U	G	H	F	A	R	E			
R		N				A		A		T		D		A
E	C	C	E	N	T	R	I	C		H	B	E	A	M
A		L		I		D		T		I		T		I
M	O	U	N	T	I	E		I	C	E	L	A	N	D
E		D		R		N		O		S		I		S
R	E	E	F	E	R		I	N	S	T	I	N	C	T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	2	1	4	5	8	3	9	6
9	5	6	7	3	1	4	2	8
8	3	4	6	9	2	7	5	1
5	1	2	8	4	7	9	6	3
4	6	9	3	2	5	1	8	7
3	8	7	9	1	6	5	4	2
1	4	3	2	6	9	8	7	5
2	9	8	5	7	3	6	1	4
6	7	5	1	8	4	2	3	9

FAITH

Good and bad qualities

The coexistence of good and bad qualities is inherent in all human beings. Not all will ever be with either good or bad alone. Lanka Sri Jeyaraj said in a discourse that a person is called righteous when his good qualities outnumber the bad ones, and vice versa, a person is called impious. We should not allow evil attributes to develop and dominate in us.

Dhritharashtra's wife, Gandhari, possessed all qualities and kept her eyes closed for her husband's sake. But on hearing the news of Kunthi Devi giving birth to a child, she became nervous and thought she could not give birth to a son yet. She became impatient and jealous.

Parimel Azhagar explains jealousy as a person who cannot tolerate seeing the progress, development, and prosperity of others.

Thiruvalluvar says the Goddess of good fortune (Mahalakshmi) cannot bear the sight of envious people, whom she will return over to her elder sister, the Goddess of misfortune (Moodevi) – (Avvithu Azhukkaru-Kural 167).

Karna was known for his charitable qualities. Duryodhana decided to plunge into war, relying only on Karna. But he refused to participate in the war as long as the grandsire Bhishma donned the role of generalissimo. Duryodhana was known for all evil qualities.

INBRIEF

TCS, IIT Bombay to work on advanced chip-sensing tool

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) said it had entered into a tie up with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-Bombay) to develop what it called India's first Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager. "This advanced sensing tool will hold the potential to unlock new levels of precision in the examination of semiconductor chips, reduce chip failures and improve the energy efficiency of electronic devices," the company said in a statement.

NCLAT backs 93% haircut by Adani Goodhomes for Radius

NCLAT upheld orders approving Adani Goodhomes' resolution plan for realty firm Radius Estate with a 93% haircut for creditors. A two-member bench rejected the petitions by two dissenting financial creditors, saying it was "commercial wisdom" of the Committee of Creditors (CoC), which approved the payout to different creditors. According to reports, Adani Goodhomes had proposed to pay about ₹76 crore as against total claims of ₹1,700 crore. PTI

'In '24, global public cloud end user spend to cross $675 bn'

Worldwide end-user spending on public cloud services is likely to grow 20.4% to $675.4 billion in 2024, up from $561 billion in 2023, according to the latest forecast from Gartner Inc. This growth is being driven by generative AI (GenAI) and application modernisation, the research firm said. All segments of the cloud market are expected to see growth in 2024. In India, end-user spending on such services is forecast to grow 30% to total $11.7 billion in 2024.

'Credit growth to slow to 14% on risk weights, softer GDP'

CRISIL sees a 200 basis points easing in bank credit expansion in FY25 from 16% pace last year due to a high base, revision in risk weights and a slowing in the economic growth momentum

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Bank credit growth in FY25 is expected to moderate 200 basis points (bps) to 14% from an estimated 16% in FY24 due to a high base effect, a revision in risk weights and a slower pace of gross domestic product (GDP) growth, CRISIL Ratings said in a report.

'Capex tailwind'
However, a revival in private corporate capital expenditure, especially towards the second half of the current year could provide a tailwind, the rating agency said.

Stating that the fundamental drivers of credit demand were broadly intact, it said the pace of deposit growth could keep a check on credit growth, even though the differential between the two had reduced over the past year.

"Within the expected overall bank credit growth of 14% in fiscal 2025, the largest segment, corporate credit (45% of bank credit) should see growth remaining steady at 13%, while retail (28% of bank credit), the second-largest segment, is expected to grow the fastest at 16%," CRISIL said, adding growth in credit to MSMEs would slow down on a high base.

Credit slowdown
Revision in risk weights are seen as a drag on loan growth this year, according to credit rating agency CRISIL

- A revival in private capex especially in H2 could, however, provide a tailwind
- Fundamental drivers of credit demand broadly intact but pace of deposit growth could constrain credit growth
- Growth in credit to MSMEs seen slowing in FY25 on a high base

'Google, Amazon oppose antitrust bill'

Reuters
NEW DELHI

A U.S. lobby group representing tech giants Google, Amazon and Apple has asked India to rethink its proposed EU-like competition law, arguing regulations against data use and preferential treatment of partners could raise user costs, a letter shows.

Citing increasing market power of a few big digital companies in India, a government panel in February proposed imposing obligations on them under a new antitrust law, which will complement existing regulations whose enforcement the panel said is "time-consuming".

India's "Digital Competition Bill" is on the lines of EU's Digital Markets Act 2022. It will apply to big firms, including those with a global turnover of more than $30 billion and at least 10 million local users.

NMDC raises iron-ore prices, Q4 net slumps

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

State-owned mining major NMDC increased iron-ore prices by ₹250 per tonne for the lump-ore variety and by ₹350 for a similar quantity of fines with effect from May 28.

Post the revision, lump ore costs ₹6,450 per tonne and fines ₹5,610, India's largest iron-ore producer said in a filing on Tuesday.

It is for the second month in a row NMDC had increased the prices.

Meanwhile, NMDC reported consolidated net profit for the quarter ended March slumped almost 38% to ₹1,415.62 crore on a more than 18% rise in total income to ₹6,908.37 crore.

For FY24, consolidated net profit rose a tad to ₹5,571.25 crore on a 23% rise in total income to ₹22,678.73 crore. NMDC declared a final dividend of ₹1.50 per share for FY24.

LIC eyes stake buys in health insurers for a segment foray

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is mulling a foray into the fast-growing health insurance segment through the inorganic route of acquiring stake in standalone health insurers.

Rules out merger
"We will definitely explore possibilities to have some stake in some standalone health insurance companies," Chairperson Siddhartha Mohanty said, ruling out mergers with non-life public sector insurers for the foray.

Driving the interest of the life insurance behemoth, which is not entirely new to the health insurance space given it deals in fixed benefit health covers, is the report of a Parliamentary Committee recommending issue of composite licence for an insurer to undertake life, general or health insurance under one entity.

Amendments to law
Given such a possibility, once the relevant law and rules were amended, LIC had "done some work internally to occupy some space in health insurance," Mr. Mohanty said on an investor call, hinting this would be the only segment of interest in the general insurance business for LIC.

The five standalone health insurers reported a more than 26% increase in gross direct premium to ₹33,115.95 crore (₹26,243.85 crore) in FY24.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	75,170	-0.29
US Dollar	83.18	-0.06
Gold	72,950	0.18
Brent oil	84.19	1.33

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3244.05	-45.00
Adani Ports	1400.50	-31.15
Apollo Hosp	5904.50	-34.80
Asian Paints	2911.20	38.90
Axis Bank	1183.40	-3.60
Bajaj Auto	8989.75	-8.95
Bajaj Finserv	1599.65	3.85
Bajaj Finance	6873.05	-22.45
Bharti Airtel	1371.05	-13.30
BPCL	646.50	-9.55
Britannia Ind	5250.55	38.30
Cipla	1479.45	0.80
Coal India	487.65	-6.80
Divis Lab	4392.10	136.85
Dr Reddys Lab	5965.30	92.60
Eicher Motors	4770.95	-22.35
Grasim Ind	2440.35	49.70
HCL Tech	1358.40	5.10
HDFC Bank	1530.50	2.80
HDFC Life	578.45	14.20
Hero MotoCorp	5183.95	100.05
Hindalco	681.30	3.45
Hind Unilever	2395.95	11.45
ICICI Bank	1126.95	-2.85
IndusInd Bank	1459.35	-5.75
Infosys	1467.05	-4.30
ITC	429.00	-2.50
JSW Steel	907.35	5.40
Kotak Bank	1703.65	-7.35
L&T	3658.20	6.20
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4885.95	-6.10
M&M	2552.80	3.70
Maruti Suzuki	12818.60	-87.50
NestleIndia	2451.70	-8.20
NTPC	365.40	-4.25
ONGC	274.30	-3.35
PowerGrid Corp	312.80	-5.15
Reliance Ind	2912.40	-20.10
SBI Life	1450.75	40.55
State Bank	831.15	-2.55
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2393.70	13.70
Sun Pharma	1464.90	-1.15
TataConsumerProduct	1095.55	7.65
Tata Motors	947.55	-10.95
Tata Steel	174.90	-0.60
TCS	3839.90	-7.15
Tech Mahindra	1315.10	-14.60
Titan	3409.40	6.00
UltraTech Cement	10178.90	-46.60
Wipro	456.05	3.60

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 28

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	82.98	83.30
Euro	90.27	90.61
British Pound	106.01	106.42
Japanese Yen (100)	52.88	53.09
Chinese Yuan	11.45	11.50
Swiss Franc	91.11	91.47
Singapore Dollar	61.56	61.80
Canadian Dollar	60.90	61.14
Malaysian Ringitt	17.69	17.76
Australian Dollar	55.25	55.47

Source:Indian Bank

RBI unveils Pravaah portal for approvals

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Tuesday unveiled three major initiatives of the Reserve Bank of India, namely the Pravaah portal, Retail Direct Mobile App and a FinTech Repository.

The Pravaah portal will make it convenient for any individual or entity to apply online for various regulatory approvals in a seamless manner, the RBI said.

The Retail Direct Mobile App will provide retail investors ease of transacting in G-Secs, it added. The Fintech Repository will contain information on data of Indian FinTech firms.

'Elgi eyes slot in top 3 air compressor firms'

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Jairam Varadaraj

Elgi Equipments aims to be among the top three global air compressor manufacturers in terms of revenue by 2035-36, said its MD Jairam Varadaraj in an interaction on Tuesday.

Elgi's FY24 consolidated sales was ₹3,218 crore. Its net profit rose year-on-year (YoY) to ₹311.9 crore from ₹293.3 crore.

Mr. Varadaraj said the U.S. operations suffered losses in the first two quarters of FY24 but business grew in all markets. In India, business increased last year across sectors like construction, mining, and after market.

The firm plans a capex of ₹254.7 crore and this is to consolidate its operations at one location in Coimbatore. This is part of investments that will happen in phases for four to five years. "We are expanding our global support centre, which is primarily spare parts supplies for the whole world and one assembly line (to Kinathukadavu) which is now sitting in Singanallur (in Coimbatore)," he added.

3M India Q4 net rises 27% to ₹173 cr., logs 5% sales uptick

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

3M India reported fourth-quarter net profit climbed 27% to ₹173 crore, from ₹136 crore in the year-earlier period, buoyed by strong growth in its healthcare, transportation and electronics segments.

Full year (FY24) profit rose to ₹583 crore, from ₹451 crore, the company said in a statement.

Revenue from operations in Q4 saw an almost 5% uptick to ₹1,095 crore.

The healthcare unit's business includes surgical supplies, while transportation and electronics units feature products such as auto parts and cables.

Sugar exports said to hinge on monsoon, cane sowing

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India may allow sugar exports after assessing the final sugarcane sowing and output in the 2024-25 season, as the world's biggest producer after Brazil is expecting a lower sugar output of 30 million tonne next season, sources said.

For the current 2023-24 season ending September, sugar production has reached 31.5 million tonne so far, with the final output likely to touch 31.8 million tonnes as mills in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka wrap up crushing, the sources added. Last year, India produced 32.8 million tonne.

Cybersecurity provider Check Point ramps up India presence

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Check Point, a Tel Aviv-headquartered provider of cloud-based cybersecurity on Tuesday, said it was ramping up it's India operations as the country is rapidly evolving into a cybersecurity market driven by increasingly sophisticated cyberthreats.

Bengaluru office
The Israeli cybersecurity firm announced the opening of its new office in Bengaluru - a 42,700 sq. ft. facility expected to foster global innovation, collaboration, and productivity.

Check Point said, the facility features a customer experience centre and AI Demo Zones, where customers can test cutting-edge security solutions tailored to their industry requirements.

"India is a strategic market for us in terms of talent and market potential. With the digitalisation pace and ever-evolving cyberthreat landscape, the region represents unprecedented business growth opportunities," said Sundar Balasubramanian, India and SAARC MD, Check Point Software Technologies.

Check Point will operate from Chennai as well by next month, the firm said.

'Steep rise in attacks'
According to Data Security Council of India (DSCI), the Indian cybersecurity market would be 5% of the global market by 2028. Check Point said, each Indian firm faced 2,807 cyberattacks every week in Q1 of FY24, demonstrating a 33% rise year-on-year, surpassing the global average rise of 28%.

This was the second highest in APAC, necessitating advanced solutions, said Mr. Balasubramanian.

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited, Upper Tunga Project Division, Shimoga
Ph : 08182-254832 E-Mail:eeutpsmg@gmail.com
1.EE/UTPDN/SMG/KNNL/PB-3/2024-25 T.N.NO-01 Dt: 28.05.2024
SHORT TERM PERCENTAGE TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement only)
On Behalf of the Managing Director, KNNL, Bengaluru, the Under signed invites tender Through e- portal system from Eligible contractors for three (03) works coming under Head of Account 4701.
1) Apprx. Amount put to tender as per estimation is 50.00 lakhs(for 03 works) (including GST) **2)** Last date for questions/clarifications regarding the tender: 01.06.2024 up to 17.30hrs. **3)** Date for Submission of filled tenders from 28.05.2024 to 04.06.2024 up to 17.29 hrs (During office Hours). Further details on date of opening the Tender /Detail of work E.M.D. Amount/Terms and Conditions of the tender/Class of Contractor, Etc, can be obtained in the Tender Notification or from the office of the Under signed during office hours or in website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/ for further details the office of the Undersigned can be contacted during office hours on phone no.08182- 254832 Information can be obtained through https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/
Sd/- Executive Engineer, KNNL,U.T.P., Division, Shivamogga
DIPR/smg/No. /05/ksmca/24-25/27

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-2 (BSWML), 1st Floor, UNI Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru-560 052.
No. DGM-2/(BSWML)/Corr- 01/24-25 Date:28.05.2024
CORRIGENDUM- 1
Sub: **Extension of Calendar of Events for Tender Notification.**
Ref: **This office Tender Notification No:DGM-2/BSWML /TEND/02/24-25, Dated: 21.05.2024.**
As per the above subject and reference, the calendar of events for the above tender notification is extended due to Administration and Technical reasons.

Sl No		As per tender notification	Updated dates please read as
1	Last date and time for uploading qualification documents	On 06.06.2024 up-to 16:00 hrs.	**On 12.06.2024 up-to 16:00 hrs.**
2	Pre bid meeting date and time	On 29.05.2024 at 15:00 hrs.	**On 03.06.2024 at 15:00 hrs.**
3	Opening of tender date and time	On 07.06.2024 at 16:30 hrs	**On 13.06.2024 at 16:30 hrs.**

For Further details visit GOK kpp portal Website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-2
BSWML
DIPR/CP/JA/145/2024-25

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT
HALIYAL DIVISION, HALIYAL
AS PER GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION No. FEE./168/FDP 2017, BANGALORE DATED: 14-11-2017. AS PER GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION No. FEE./168/FDP 2017, BANGALORE DATED: 27-02-2018. AS PER APCCF (FRM) BENGALURU OFFICE LETTER NO APCCF (FRM)/B3/SALES/CR-06/2022-23. DATE: -17-05-2024.
KARNATAKA FOREST CODE, 1976
APPENDIX XVIII A (Rule 64)
DETAILED NOTIFICATION FOR e-TENDER CUM AUCTION OF TIMBER AND OTHER FOREST PRODUCE IN GTD DANDELI, BHAGAWATI, JAGALBET AND KULGI DEPOT OF HALIYAL DIVISION, HALIYAL
No: B5/Sale-2024/MSTC/CR- 30/2024-25 Date: 20-05-2024
It is hereby notified for the general information of the public that, Timber and other forest produce stocked and lotted in the **Jagalbet** Government Timber Depots of **Haliyal** Division **Haliyal** will be sold through the public e-tender cum auction method in one or more sessions from **15-06-2024** (I II &III Sessions) in Jagalbet Depot from 10-00 A.M. till the bidding for all lots is completed. The Sale Conducting Officer will be the Deputy Conservator of Forests, **Haliyal** Division **Haliyal.**
For any Clarifications, you can contact:
Assistant Conservator of Forests, Govt. Timber Depot, Dandeli:
acfgtd.dandeli@gmail.com Phone No: 08284-231237
Range Forest Officer, Virnoli (Kulgi Depot):
virnolirfo96@gmail.com Phone No: 08284-258050
Range Forest Officer, Bhagawati:
bgtirfo97@gmail.com Phone No: 08284-267818
Range Forest Officer, Jagalbet:
rfojbt93@gmail.com Ph: 08383-252767
Deputy Conservator of Forests, Haliyal:
dcfhalyal@gmail.com Phone No: 08284-220128
Sri. Damodhar, Manager, MSTC Limited Bangalore Mob No: 9841002253
Sd/- (Prashant kumar K.C., IFS.)
Deputy Conservator of Forests,
Haliyal Division, Haliyal.
DIPR/ADK/KSMCA/10/24-25 Dt.28.05.2024

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No. KPTCL/B14/EON-94230/2023-24 Date: 28.05.2024
NOTIFICATION
Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited intends to provide personal accident group insurance to its employees working across the State of Karnataka through opening dedicated 'Salary Savings Bank Account' in Nationalised Bank. In this connection, "Expression of Interest" is invited from the nationalised banks having branches in all the regions of Karnataka.
Interested Nationalised banks may submit their proposals with the following terms and conditions to the "Director (Admin and Human Resource), KPTCL, Corporate Office, Kaveri Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru-560009." **on or before 10.06.2024 :**
Terms and Conditions:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Proposed Claim Amount
1.	Validity of the Contract	**5 years from 01.08.2024.**
2.	Death Claims	**Rs. 100.00 lakhs (Minimum)**
3.	Total Permanent Disability	Claims to be quoted by the Bank.
4.	Permanent Partial disability	Claims to be quoted by the Bank. In accordance with the provisions of Employee's Compensation Act-1923, Schedule-1.
5.	Temporary Partial disability	
6.	Temporary total disability claims	Claims to be quoted by the Bank.
7.	Other benefits/ privileges	To be quoted by the Bank. 1. 2. 3. 4.

Sd/- Director (A & HR), KPTCL, Kaveri Bhavan, Benglauru-09

HONG KONG

Six held under Hong Kong security law for 'posting messages' online

AP

The Hong Kong police arrested six persons on Tuesday under the city's new security law for "posting messages with seditious intention" online on a Facebook page about commemorating Beijing's deadly 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. Officials arrested five women and one man as part of the incident. AFP

TBILSI

Georgia parliament adopts 'foreign influence' law despite protests

AP

Georgia's parliament voted on Tuesday to adopt a divisive "foreign influence" law targeting NGOs and the media despite protests. The law, which critics have compared to repressive Russian legislation, forces groups receiving at least 20% of funding from abroad to register as "organisations pursuing interests of a foreign power." AFP

LAHORE

Pakistan 'violated' 1999 agreement signed with India: Nawaz Sharif

REUTERS

Former Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday admitted that Islamabad had "violated" an agreement with India signed by him and then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999, in a reference to the Kargil misadventure by General Pervez Musharraf. Mr. Sharif was speaking at a meet of the PML-N general council. PTI

BAGHDAD

Iraqi cleric Sadr demands closure of U.S. embassy after Rafah strike

REUTERS

Influential Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr renewed his calls to close the U.S. embassy in Baghdad on Tuesday after an Israeli strike killed dozens of civilians in a camp in Gaza. Mr. Sadr condemned the Israeli strike and Washington's "shameless" support for the "genocide" he charged was under way in Gaza. AFP

China cites concerns about Israel's Rafah strikes

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China expressed on Tuesday "grave concern" over Israel's military operations in Rafah, where an Israeli strike killed dozens in a displaced persons camp. China "expresses its grave concern over the ongoing Israeli military operations in Rafah", Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

Beijing urged "all parties to protect civilians and civilian facilities". It also said it "strongly urges Israel to listen to the appeals of the international community and to stop its attacks on Rafah".

Beijing has been calling for an immediate ceasefire since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in last October.

Latest Israeli strikes on Rafah kill 37, days after attack on tent camps

Sunday evening's strike on camps had left at least 45 Palestinians dead and hundreds of civilians with shrapnel and burns; Netanyahu said the attack was a mistake, but vowed to continue the war; 'There is no safe place in Gaza,' says UN chief

Agence France-Presse
Associated Press
RAFAH

Israeli shelling and air strikes killed at least 37 people, most of them sheltering in tents, outside the southern Gaza city of Rafah overnight and on Tuesday – pummelling the same area where strikes triggered a deadly fire days earlier in a camp for displaced Palestinians – according to witnesses, emergency workers and hospital officials.

Shelling late on Monday and early on Tuesday hit Rafah's western Tel al-Sultan district, killing at least 16 persons, the Palestinian Civil Defence and the Palestinian Red Crescent said. Seven of the dead were in tents next to a UN facility about about 200 m from the site of Sunday night's strike and fire.

On the go: Palestinians flee from the southern Gaza city of Rafah during an Israeli ground and air offensive in the city on Tuesday. AP

On Tuesday afternoon, an Israeli drone strike hit tents near a field hospital by the Mediterranean coast west of Rafah, killing at least 21 people, including 13 women, the Gaza Health Ministry said.

It came as Israeli tanks penetrated the heart of Rafah, according to Palestinian officials, despite widespread condemnation over an air strike on a crowded camp in the southern Gaza city that killed 45 and injured many just two days earlier.

Israeli tanks were "stationed on the al-Awda roundabout in the centre of the city of Rafah," a witness said. A Palestinian security source confirmed tanks were in the centre of Rafah where Israeli troops launched a controversial assault earlier this month.

Sunday evening's camp strike, which Gaza medics said also left hundreds of civilians with shrapnel and burn wounds, drew condemnation from world leaders. The sight of the charred carnage, blackened corpses and children being rushed to hospitals led UN chief Antonio Guterres to declare that "there is no safe place in Gaza. This horror must stop." Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the strike a "tragic accident" but also vowed to push on with the military campaign to destroy Hamas.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 36,096 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

'Poland should not rule out sending troops to Ukraine'

Agence France-Presse
WARSAW

Radoslaw Sikorski

Poland should not rule out sending ground troops into Ukraine to help fight Russia, the government said on Tuesday, in the latest sign of divisions between Kyiv's Western backers on the issue.

In February, French President Emmanuel Macron created uproar among fellow members of the U.S.-led NATO defence alliance when he refused to rule out the despatch of Western troops to Ukraine.

But with Ukraine ceding ground in the face of a Russian offensive in the east, there are signs others among Kyiv's allies, including Poland, have begun to reconsider the idea.

Questioned on the prospect of sending Polish troops to fight in Ukraine, Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said Warsaw should "not rule out any option".

"Let (Russian President Vladimir) Putin guess what we are going to do," he said in an interview with three European newspapers, including Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Norway, Ireland and Spain recognise Palestinian state

Associated Press
BARCELONA

Spain, Norway and Ireland formally recognised a Palestinian state on Tuesday in a coordinated effort by the three Western European nations to add international pressure on Israel to soften its devastating response to last year's Hamas-led attack. Tel Aviv slammed the diplomatic move that will have no immediate impact on its grinding war in Gaza.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez told his nation in a televised address from Madrid that "this is a historic decision that has a single goal, and that is to help Israelis and Palestinians achieve peace."

The development represents a victory for Palestinian efforts in the world of public opinion

Ireland and Norway soon joined Spain in formalising a decision they had jointly announced the previous week.

While some 140 countries have recognised a Palestinian state none of the major Western powers has done so. Still, the adherence of three European countries to the group represents a victory for Palestinian efforts in the world of public opinion.

Ground reality

An aircraft flies by as a man collects trash at Paranaque in the Philippines's Metro Manila. Inadequate garbage collection services, lack of disposal and recycling facilities, and grinding poverty have been blamed for the growing problem of plastic waste across the Philippines. AFP

Houthi role suspected as missile hits vessel in Red Sea off Yemen

Associated Press
DUBAI

A missile attack damaged a ship on Tuesday in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen, with a private security firm saying radio traffic suggested the vessel took on water after being struck.

No group immediately claimed responsibility, but suspicion immediately fell on Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have launched a number of attacks targeting ships over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The attack happened off the port city of Hodeida in the southern Red Sea, near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, according to the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center. The vessel "sustained damage" in the assault and later reported an "impact in the water in close proximity to the vessel". "The crew are reported safe and the vessel is proceeding to its next port of call," the center said.

Taiwan's legislature passes Bills curtailing the powers of President

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Taiwan's Opposition-controlled legislature passed changes on Tuesday that are seen as favouring China and diminishing the power of the island's President, sparking protests by thousands of people.

The changes pushed by the Opposition Nationalist Party and its allies would give the legislature greater power to control budgets, including defence spending that the party has blocked in what many see as a concession to China.

It remains unclear whether the package of Bills will become law. The Executive Yuan, the executive branch of government headed by the Premier, may veto legislation or pass it on to the President, who has to proclaim Bills into law within 10 days. If the Executive Yuan or the President does not comply, the Bills will not become law.

Lai Ching-te

People protest

Thousands of people gathered outside the legislature to protest the changes. The legislative chamber was festooned with banners promoting both sides in the dispute, while arguments on the floor broke into shouting and pushing matches.

The Nationalists, also known as the KMT, officially back unification with China, from which Taiwan separated during a civil war in 1949. They took control of the legislature with a single-seat majority after elections in January, while the presidency went to Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party, which favours Taiwan's de facto independence from China.

DPP legislators accused deputies from the KMT and the minority Taiwan People's Party of undermining Taiwan's democracy by expanding the legislature's oversight of the executive branch. They denounced the legislation as creating a "black box" for what the KMT has portrayed as reforms.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
TGSPDCL (erstwhile TSSPDCL)

e-Procurement Tender Notice (Paper Notification)

TGSPDCL intends to float tenders for procurement of (a) ABT Compatible Open Access Meters of 0.2S Class Accuracy (b) 11KV 800A DB AB Switches (c) 12V 42AH SMF VRLA Batteries (d) 33KV CTs of 25/1A (e) 33KV CTs of 50/1A on e-procurement platform.

The detailed description and for further details of each item above, please visit **www.tssouthernpower.com and www.tender.telangana.gov.in.**
Phone: 040-23431360, 1033, 1035, 1026

Sd/-
CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&MM)

R.O.No.: 3-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25, Date:28.05.2024

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଦର୍ଶ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ
ODISHA ADARSHA VIDYALAYA SANGATHAN

N-1/9, Nayapali, PO: Sainik School,
District- Khurda, Bhubaneswar,
Odisha- 751005.
Website: oav.edu.in ; Phone - 0674 - 2302329
Email: oavsbbsr.od@gov.in/spd@oav.edu.in

INSPIRE AND EMPOWER

No.2820 / OAVS. Date : 28.05.2024

Notice for Downloading the e-Admit card & Details of Facilitation Counter

Pursuant to Notification No.2462, dated.03.05.2024, 2476, dated 06.05.2024 and 2784 dated 27.05.2024 of OAVS for the Recruitment of Principals and Teachers for OAVs, (Advt. No. 01/2024) the CBT examination is scheduled to be held on **05.06.2024, 10.06.2024 and 11.06.2024.**

The link for downloading e-Admit card is available in the OAVS website. It is to inform that the e-Admit card is self-generated. The e-Admit card is generated based on the data provided by the candidate. Therefore, no signature of the undersigned is required for it.

In order to facilitate the candidates who were unable to download the e-Admit card , Facilitation Counters shall be opened on **04.06.2024 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM** . The details of Facilitation Counters are available in the OAVS website. It is requested to all concerned to visit the website regularly.

-Sd-
State Project Director

n-06 OIPR-27029/11/0004/2425

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Khanij Bhavan, 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad – 500 028. (CIN) : L13100TG1958GOI001674
ramojirao@nmdc.co.in ; jvenkatesan@nmdc.co.in; akpadhy@nmdc.co.in

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. HQMM/2020-23/30000237 /473 **Dt: 29/05/2024**
MSTC event no: NMDC/Head Office/ Material Management/4/24-25/ET/141/ TRACK DOZER)

Online Tenders are invited through E-Procurement Mode for the following equipment's from reputed manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India required for NMDC Ltd, BIOM Bacheli Complex and DIOM Donimalai Complex.

Description of Equipment	Qty (No.)	Display of Tender Documents Period	Last date & time for submission of offer	Earnest Money Deposit
Supply of Track Dozer (860HP), along with Operation and Maintenance Spares for 6 Years/12,000 Hours whichever is earlier as per specifications mentioned in Annexure-III of the tender.	05	**Draft Tender** 29/05/2024. To 06/06/2024. The Prebid meeting is scheduled on 06/06/2024 (15:00 hrs) through Microsoft Teams **Final Tender** 13/06/2024 To 04/07/2024.	04/07/2024 2.30 PM	Rs 5,00,000/-

Complete Tender document is available in website: **www.nmdc.co.in, https://www.mstcecommerce.com/ eprocn/** & **http://eprocure.gov.in.** Any corrigendum to the above tender will be uploaded only on MSTC Portal / NMDC website and will not be published in newspapers. Prospective bidders should visit MSTC Portal and NMDC website, regularly from time to time to take note of corrigendum, if any.
For further details logon to Tender Section of our website: **www.nmdc.co.in**

General Manager (Materials)

FLASHBACK

It's an irony that India won T20 WC before the IPL, says Atherton

GETTY IMAGES

Michael Atherton said it is ironical that the only time India won the T20 World Cup was before the IPL came into being. "It's also an irony, because everyone talks about the IPL and how it has improved India's T20 cricket. The irony is that the only time it has won is pre IPL," Atherton told *Sky Sports*.

FRONT-RUNNER

India is the strongest side even with injuries, says Morgan

PTI

India is a strong contender to win the T20 World Cup, says Eoin Morgan. "The strongest side even with injuries throughout the tournament is India. Its strength and depth is absolutely incredible. It is favourite for me; the quality it has on paper, if it produces it I think it can beat anybody," Morgan said on *Sky Sports*.

BIDDING FAREWELL

You gave me incredible emotions: Cornet tells fans after bowing out

AFP

Alize Cornet was given a standing ovation after playing the final match of her long tennis career in the first round of the French Open in Paris on Tuesday. She lost 2-6, 1-6 to No. 7 seed Zheng Qinwen. "You gave me incredible emotions. It's tough to realise that it's the last time I'm feeling this," the 34-year-old Frenchwoman said.

UNCALLED FOR

French player hits spectator with a ball, escapes disqualification

AP

French tennis player Terence Atmane apologised on Tuesday for hitting a spectator with a ball at the French Open. Atmane angrily struck a ball and accidentally hit a woman spectator in the leg. He wasn't disqualified but received a warning for unsportsmanlike conduct. Atmane lost to Sebastian Ofner in five sets.

South Africa has the firepower to pass the Group D test

The challenge will come from former champion Sri Lanka; Bangladesh enters the tournament on a low after suffering a series loss to USA; Netherlands, Nepal will be keen on making an upset or two

T20 WC COUNTDOWN

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

In *The Hindu*'s countdown to the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup which commences in the West Indies and USA on June 2, we take a look at the teams in Group D.

SOUTH AFRICA: A second-string South African side was blanked 0-3 in the T20I series against West Indies a few days ago. The arrival of powerful reinforcements – Aiden Markram, Heinrich Klaasen, David Miller, Tabraiz Shamsi, and Tristan Stubbs, to name a few – gives the T20 World Cup squad far greater depth. Quinton de Kock, who has retired from ODI and Test cricket, is a familiar face at the top of the order. The poor form of de Kock and lead pacer Anrich Nortje, however, is cause for concern.

Key player: Tristan Stubbs: With a strike rate of 190.90 and an average of 54 for Delhi Capitals in IPL 2024, Stubbs excelled as a specialist finisher.

The squad: Aiden Markram (Capt.), Ottniel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, and Tristan Stubbs.

SRI LANKA: Sri Lanka has won all three of its T20I series held this year, albeit against weaker teams (Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Zimbabwe). The team is led by experienced all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, who missed the IPL due to an injury. In Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana, the Lankans have two quality spinners primed to exploit slow pitches in the West Indies.

SL will hope that death-over bowling specialist Matheesha Pathirana recovers quickly from a hamstring strain.

Key player: Kusal Mendis: The 29-year-old opener will be entrusted with giving SL a flying start. His role is especially crucial given that the batting line-up lacks big hitters.

The squad: Wanindu Hasaranga (Capt.), Charith Asalanka, Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya de Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmantha Chameera, Matheesha Pathirana, Nuwan Thushara, and Dilshan Madushanka.

BANGLADESH: The Tigers had a major slip in the build up to the T20 World Cup, losing 1-2 to World No. 19 United States of America in a T20I series last week. Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and coach Chandika Hathurusinghe rely on the same set of players to come good in this mega event.

The unit's lack of power-hitters is out of sync with modern T20 best practices. A warm-up match against India on June 1 serves as the last chance to get the house in order.

Key player: Mustafizur Rahman: A career-best six for 10 against USA proved that the left-arm seamer remains a valuable T20 asset. Mustafizur's ability to deliver yorkers is particularly useful in the death overs.

The squad: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Capt.), Taskin Ahmed, Litton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Shakib Al Hasan, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah Riyad, Jaker Ali Anik, Tanvir Islam, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, and Tanzim Hasan Sakib.

NETHERLANDS: Known to consistently punch above its weight, Netherlands earned its spot in this tournament by virtue of finishing in the top-eight of the 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup. That campaign included a 13-run win over South Africa in the Super 12 phase, which effectively knocked the Proteas out of the competition.

Netherlands will miss the services of former SA international Roelof van der Merwe and batter Colin Ackermann, both of whom have chosen English county commitments over National duty.

Key player: Max O'Dowd: The Auckland-born opener is the standout batter. In the recent Tri-Nation T20I series involving Ireland, Netherlands, and Scotland, O'Dowd finished as the highest run-scorer.

The squad: Scott Edwards (Capt.), Aryan Dutt, Bas de Leede, Kyle Klein, Logan van Beek, Max O'Dowd, Michael Levitt, Paul van Meekeren, Saqib Zulfiqar, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle, Vikramjit Singh, Viv Kingma, and Wesley Barresi.

NEPAL: Nepal qualified for the 2024 T20 WC by entering the final of the ICC's Asia region qualifiers in November last year. Nepal had previously appeared in the 2014 ICC World Twenty20. Apart from the recent five-match T20 leg against West Indies A, Nepal has not got the chance to test its mettle against quality oppositions.

Key player: Rohit Paudel: Facing a West Indies A attack which included Obed McCoy, Oshane Thomas, and Roston Chase, captain Paudel showed his class with scores of 112, 71 n.o. and 82.

The squad: Rohit Paudel (Capt.), Aasif Sheikh, Anil Kumar Sah, Kushal Bhurtel, Kushal Malla, Dipendra Singh Airee, Lalit Rajbanshi, K.C. Karan, Gulshan Jha, Sompal Kami, G.C. Pratis, Sundeep Jora, Abinash Bohara, Sagar Dhakal, and Kamal Singh Airee.

Protean fire: With the pitches expected to turn, especially in the second half of the tournament, tweakers Shamsi and Maharaj will come into play in a big way. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

'I am privileged to take India's 1.4 billion people to the Hall of Fame'

N. Sudarshan
CHENNAI

Leander Paes' storied career is dotted with many historic highs. But his induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame class of 2024 in the player category may well be one of the crowning glories.

At a fireside chat hosted by *Sportstar* at *The Hindu's* Chennai headquarters, Paes, who was in conversation with Suresh Balakrishna, *The Hindu's* Chief Revenue Officer, said it was a "humbling moment."

"Today I am so privileged, to take not just me but India's 1.4 billion people [to the Hall of Fame]," Paes said. "I grew up in a middle-class family whose passion was for sports. And it just shows that with hard work and belief, anybody can become a champion."

Legacy: Paes said a Grand Slam title meant more than aspiring for a singles top-10 ranking. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Atlanta bronze

Paes may have won 18 Majors (eight in doubles and 10 in mixed doubles), but his stock was built on the singles bronze at Atlanta 1996, India's first individual Olympic medal since wrestler Khashaba Jadhav's bronze at 1952 Helsinki.

"I was very process oriented," said Paes, who competed in a record seven Olympics. "Every Sunday after Church, I used to polish my father's [Olympic] medal. My parents had hundreds of trophies but this one [the Olympic medal] attracted me. I wanted one of my own.

"I was smart enough to know that I couldn't do it alone. My two sisters brought me up; there were some amazing coaches, and all those doubles and mixed doubles partners. They should all be in the Hall of Fame."

In the first decade of his career, Paes was adept at singles too. He won his lone ATP Tour title, on grass in 1998 at Newport, which incidentally hosts the Hall of Fame festivities.

"Singles results helped my belief. [But I had to decide] will it inspire the kids if I am in singles top-10 or if I am a Grand Slam champion. Before us [himself and Mahesh Bhupathi] nobody had won a Major. That's [my] legacy.

"To be No.1 and see the [Indian] flag flying high is pretty cool. Twenty Slams [including two in juniors] and World No. 1 meant more than being in the singles top-10."

Paes also paid tribute to 22-time Major and 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal, who lost in the first round at Roland-Garros on Monday, in what increasingly seems like his final bow in Paris.

Changing of guard

"It does feel like the changing of the guard," Paes said. "[Carlos] Alcaraz, if he can stay healthy, can be the next king and has the ability to win 20-plus Slams. I played with Nadal in doubles at Paris Bercy [Masters].

"To see a 14-time champion be unseeded and lose in the first round, I understand that [feeling] all too well. We all came in when the sun was shining and we played through a long sunset."

Sabalenka powers into second round

FRENCH OPEN

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka overpowered Russian teenager Erika Andreeva 6-1, 6-2 in just 68 minutes under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier to enter the second round at a rainswept Roland-Garros on Tuesday.

World No. 2 Sabalenka fired 27 winners past the 100th-ranked Andreeva and broke serve five times in a dominant display.

"I'm trying to do well on clay, it is tough conditions but I enjoy playing here," said Sabalenka.

The Belarusian has made at least the last four at her past six Grand Slams and is expected to be Iga Swiatek's toughest rival in the Pole's bid for a fourth French Open title.

Heavy rain had caused play on the outside, uncovered courts to be delayed by five hours.

In men's singles, two-time runner-up Casper Ruud cruised to a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Felipe Meligeni Alves.

Ruud was beaten in straight sets by Novak Djokovic in last year's final following a one-sided loss to Rafael Nadal in the 2022 showpiece. He had also lost the 2022 US Open final to Carlos Alcaraz.

Frenchwoman Alize Cornet's career ended with a straight-sets defeat by Zheng Qinwen in her record-extending 69th consecutive Grand Slam appearance. Cornet was no match for China's Australian Open runner-up Zheng, losing 6-2, 6-1. She made her debut at Roland Garros as a 15-year-old in 2005 and had not missed a Grand Slam tournament since the 2006 US Open.

Cornet reached a career-high ranking of 11th in 2009 and enjoyed a surprise run to the 2022 Australian Open quarterfinals.

Over on Court Suzanne Lenglen, Elena Rybakina powered into the second round with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Belgian Greet Minnen.

Dominant: Sabalenka lost just three games in her opener. AFP

TOP RESULTS

First round: Men: 28-Etcheverry (Arg) bt Cazaux (Fra) 3-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-4; 7-Ruud (Nor) bt Alves (Bra) 6-3, 6-4, 6-3; 12-Fritz (USA) bt Coria (Arg) 2-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-1; 11-De Minaur (Aus) bt Michelsen (USA) 6-1, 6-0, 6-2.

Women: 7-Qinwen (Chn) bt Cornet (Fra) 6-2, 6-1; 4-Rybakina (Kaz) bt Minnen (Bel) 6-2, 6-3; 2-Sabalenka (Blr) bt Andreeva (Rus) 6-1, 6-2.

Monday: Men: 30-Musetti (Ita) bt Galan (Col) 6-3, 6-3, 7-5; 23-Cerundolo (Arg) bt Hanfmann (Ger) 6-3, 6-3, 6-4; 14-Paul (USA) bt Cachin (Arg) 6-2, 6-3, 6-1; 5-Medvedev (Rus) bt Koepfer (Ger) 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 6-3; Arnaldi (Ita) bt 29-Fils (Fra) 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; 20-Baez (Arg) bt Heide (Bra) 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

Women: Cocciaretto (Ita) bt 13-Haddad Maia (Bra) 3-6, 6-4, 6-1; 31-Fernandez (Can) bt Ponchet (Fra) 6-2, 6-0; Gracheva (Fra) bt 6-Sakkari (Gre) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Wednesday's Picks

Men
2-Sinner vs Gasquet
3-Alcaraz vs De Jong
6-Rublev vs Martinez
9-Tsitsipas vs Altmaier
10-Dimitrov vs Marozsan

Women
1-Swiatek vs Osaka
3-Gauff vs Zidansek
5-Vondrousova vs Volynets
8-Jabeur vs Osorio
9-Ostapenko vs Tauson

INBRIEF

Olympic Pole vault champion Braz banned for doping

The 2016 Olympic pole vault champion Thiago Braz has been banned for 16 months after he was found to have violated anti-doping regulations, the AIU said in a statement on Tuesday. The 30-year-old Brazilian, who also took bronze in Tokyo in 2021, will miss the Paris Olympics. Braz has filed an appeal with the CAS.

Indian boys and girls reign supreme in South Asian TT

India's under-19 girls' team retained its title at the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships after blanking hosts Sri Lanka 3-0 in the final in Kandy. In the boys' under-15 category, the results were no different.

The results: Boys: Under-15: India bt Sri Lanka 3-1 (Sarthak Arya bt Naviru Nethsitha 11-4, 11-5, 11-5, Soham Mukherjee bt Akian Bojith 11-6, 11-6, 11-5, Sahil Rawat lost to Agasthya Ananditha 7-11, 11-3, 11-6, 9-11, 10-12 and Sarthak bt Agasthya Ananditha 7-11, 11-3, 11-6, 9-11, 10-12).
Girls: Under-19: India bt Sri Lanka 3-0 (Sayali Wani bt Bimandee Bandara 11-6, 12-10, 11-8, Pritha Vartikar bt Tamadi Kavindya 7-11, 11-3, 11-7, 6-11, 11-8 and Taneesha Kotecha bt Divya Dharani 11-8, 11-7, 11-7).
Under-15: India bt Sri Lanka 3-0 (Divyanshi Bowmick bt Yoshini Jayawardena 11-8, 11-7, 11-9, Syndrela Das bt Shanya Muthuli 11-9, 11-9, 11-4 and Kavya Bhatt bt Samindi Weerasooriya 11-3, 11-8, 11-7).

Kishan, Geeta in lead in State-ranking tenpin bowling

R. Kishan, with a total pinfall of 3642, went into the lead at the end of Round 1 of the Karnataka State-Ranking tenpin bowling tournament in Bengaluru. Akaash Ashok Kumar (3569) is second, followed by Girish Gaba (3464) in third position. Among women, P. Geetha, with a total pinfall of 3091, is in the lead. J. Preemal (3029) is second, followed by Hitasha (2822) in third position.

Satwik-Chirag bows out in first round of Singapore Open

World No. 1 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty crashed out of the Singapore Open after suffering a 20-22, 18-21 defeat against Denmark's World No. 34 Daniel Lundgaard and Mads Vestergaard in the opening round here on Tuesday.

The results (first round): Men: Lee Cheuk Yiu (HK) bt Priyanshu Rajawat 23-21, 21-19.
Women: Pornpicha Choeikeewong (Tha) bt Aakarshi Kashyap 21-7, 21-15. **Doubles:** Chang Ching Hui & Yang Ching Tun (Tpe) bt Rutuparna & Swetaparna Panda 21-12, 12-21, 21-13.
Mixed doubles: Lee CHun Hei Reginald & Ng Tsz Yau (HK) bt Ashith Surya & Amrutha Pramuthesh 21-8, 21-17.

Tyson recovering after falling ill during a flight

Mike Tyson was recovering on Monday after falling ill a day earlier during a flight from Miami to Los Angeles, his representatives said. The 58-year-old boxing legend "became nauseous and dizzy due to an ulcer flare up 30 minutes before landing" on Sunday, his publicist's office said in a statement. "Thankfully, Mr. Tyson is doing great," the statement said. "He is appreciative to the medical staff that were there to help him." Tyson is preparing to fight the 27-year-old social media star-turned-boxer Jake Paul this summer at the 80,000-seat home of the Dallas Cowboys. *Netflix* will carry the fight live, a first for the streaming platform.

India round of MotoGP championship moved to 2025

The India round of the MotoGP championship will not not take place on the scheduled date in September and instead has been moved to March 2025, local promoters of the race said on Tuesday.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Singapore Open, Sports 18-1 JioCinema, 9 a.m.
Roland-Garros: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m. onwards

Confident of a good show by India in Paris: Anju

The Athletics Federation of India senior vice-president says preparations are going well ahead of the Olympics; adds that injuries are part and parcel of the game

ATHLETICS

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

A precautionary pull-out by Neeraj Chopra from competition, ineligible race walkers having to qualify again and qualifying nerves for some prominent hopefuls have all managed to temper India's athletics hopes at the Paris Olympics. Still, there is little cause for concern, according to Anju Bobby George.

The former World Championship medallist and long jump legend is confident that India will put up a good show come July.

"The preparations are going well and the federation is ensuring everything is right. Except for injuries to 1-2 athletes like (Murali) Sreeshankar, the schedule for training and competitions is well planned. We can expect a good show regarding the finalists and medallists," Anju, now a senior vice-president at the Athletics Federation of India told *The Hindu*.

After two back-to-back competitions in tough conditions, Neeraj was expected to participate at the Ostrava Golden Spike meet but pulled out with discomfort in his adductor muscles. While it is not serious, it did create alarm among fans, more so given the unfortunate knee injury and surgery that forced Sreeshankar to end his season prematurely last month.

No alarm: There is little cause for concern over Neeraj's injury. K.R. DEEPAK

Difficult

"It's difficult to accept being out of competition for an athlete with injury because they put everything on the line for four years for that one moment," Anju admitted.

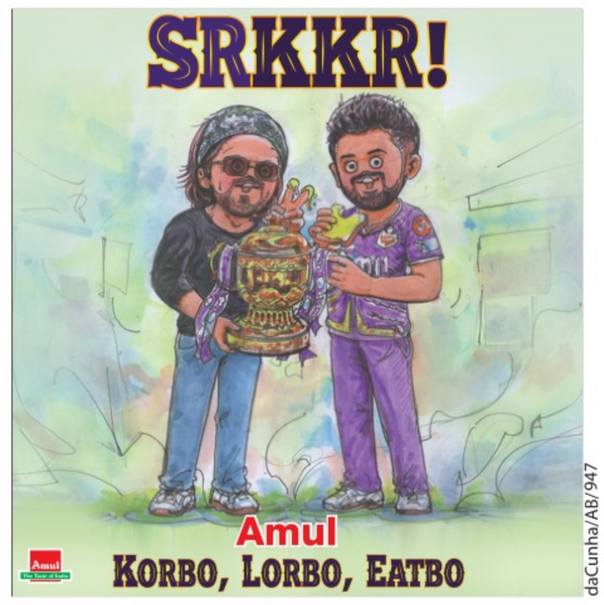
"Sreeshankar was one of our great hopes, he was doing consistently well all through last year. But these things happen.

"I was in a similar situation in 2000 where despite being the first athlete to qualify for the Olympics, I was sitting at home with injury.

"It takes a while to realise what happened. It may take 9-12 months for him to return to full training but he is a great talent and a fighter. He will bounce back and he is yet to achieve his full potential," she added.

Away from the elite athletes, Anju continues to live her dream of winning an Olympic medal, through her trainees at the Anju Bobby George Foundation and is confident of eventual success.

"Shaili Singh is the most prominent, but there are others in line too like Poorva, Kusuma, and Rachitha, getting better every day. The main challenge is to get their technique right – which means they have to first unlearn what they know," she explained.



Nishant outclasses Otgonbaatar

BOXING QUALIFIERS

Press Trust of India
BANGKOK

Nishant Dev out-punched Mongolia's Otgonbaatar Byamba-Erdeneto in just over two minutes to progress to the 71kg pre-quarterfinals while Abhinash Jamwal was knocked out by Colombia's Jose Manuel Viafara Fory in the 63.5kg category of the second Boxing World Olympic Qualifiers on Tuesday.

Later Sachin Siwach registered a convincing win 5-0 over Frederik Jensen of Denmark in the 57kg category.

Dev began with a flurry of punches against Otgonbaatar to force a standing count in the frst minute.

A combination of a jab and cross hook led to another standing count and the Referee Stopped the Contest (RSC) with 58 seconds still left to play in Round 1.

Earlier, Jamwal fought back after losing a close first round. He clearly dominated the third and final round forcing a tie on points from all five judges.

The judges were asked to weigh the performance again and decide on the winner.

The results: Pre-quarterfinals: 71kg: Nishant Dev bt Otgonbaatar Byamba-Erdeneto (Mon) RSC Round-1. **63.5kg:** Jose Manuel Viafara Fory (Col) bt Abhinash Jamwal 5-0. **57kg:** Sachin Siwach bt Frederik Jensen (Den) 5-0.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Sameer's ton highlights Jawahar SC's victory

Sameer Deepak scored 122 as Jawahar SC eased past Eleven Brother's in the KSCA U-16 inter-club tournament.

The scores: Sangam CA 230 in 50 overs (Anshuman Samal 46, G.S. Monith 27, Syed Amin 33, H.M. Rithvik 25 n.o.) bt Lions CC 86 in 25.2 overs (Rupesh Kumar 3/31, Akhil Gowda 3/16).

Swastic Union (2) 285/9 in 50 overs (M. Asaad 47, Aditya Umadi 37, R. Nithin 29, Khush Kothari 26) bt Visweswarapuram (1) 158 in 34.5 overs (M. Faheem 54, Nalin Goyal 27).

Bharath 172 in 46.4 overs (Sanchit Lokesh Talanki 28, Bhargav Karthik 27, Harshit Arun Mishra 4/41) lost to Jawans 173/8 in 44.5 overs (Arhaan Jai Singh 39, Rennell Pais 33, Samarth Jadhav 27, Pranith 3/21).

BUCC (1) 298/6 in 50 overs (Adhrit Rao 125, Yash Rajanna 57, Aditya Singh 39, Vishal Kumar 3/54) bt Chintamani SA 138 in 39.4 overs (Vivek Pachisia 4/23).

Jawahar SC (1) 315/6 in 50 overs (Sameer Deepak Godhi 122, D. Prajwal Gowda 68, Tej Jaganath 45, M.C. Mourya 28) bt Eleven Brother's CC 174 in 40.4 overs (M.V. Kiran 34, Sampathkumar Bevoor 4/19, Chirag Paidikondala 3/24).

Cavaliers 125 in 34 overs (Varun Prasanna Kumar 32, Sanagm D'Souza 4/34) lost to Ranji CC 127/6 in 31.2 overs (Dhruvesh 3/34).

Friends XI, Doddaballapura 84 in 26.5 overs (Daniel James 27, C. Barath 6/10) lost to Bangalore Occasionals 85/4 in 18 overs (Shivom Yogesh Mehare 36, Krishna Pahuja 30).

Herons 139 in 37 overs (Murugesh Baskar 45 n.o., Gagan Karnati 41, G. Bharadwaj 4/14, Samarth Borji 3/16) bt Engrades CC 104 in 34.1 overs (Prathyush Shetty 3/25).

RV Engineering College Gymkhana 51 in 15.2 overs (Nakul Shetty 5/22) lost to Friends Union (2) 53/4 in 10.3 overs (A.G. Kallesh 25).

Century Cricketers 102 in 29.2 overs (Nirvann Masand 40, R. Rohith Reddy 32, M.D. Dharsh 4/25, H.R. Yashas 3/11) lost to The Bangalore Cricketers 104/1 in 19.2 overs (A. Rishik 54 n.o.).

South End SC 363/7 in 50 overs (107 n.o., Syed Adeeb 67 n.o., Vineet Shrigond 57, Sankalp Sheshadri Kashyap 37, Sharvil Naik 36, Aryaman Srivastava 3/37) bt Karnataka Youth CA, Malur 124 in 35 overs (Likith Prasad Reddy 29, Harikrishna Bhat 3/22, Syed Adeeb 3/31).

Ajin stars for MNK Rao Park BC

Ajin led the way with 30 points as MNK Rao Park BC defeated Vimanapura SC 85-72 in the State B-division basketball league championship.

The results: MNK Rao Park BC 85 (Ajin 30, Rinal 13) bt Vimanapura SC 72 (Dev 25, Sahil 17); Bharath SU 84 (Akshay Prasad 29, Nakul 29) bt Koramangala SC 82 (Rishab 18, Daniel 15); KSP 70 (Dheeraj Reddy 13, Nithin 12) bt Devanga Union 33 (Sudheendra 12); MNK Rao Park BC 69 (Ajin 15, Faaz 13) bt Koramangala SC 57 (Priyanshu 12, Manju 10); KSP 81 (Sumanth 36, Abhishek Gowda 10) bt Vimanapura SC 54 (Rahul 19, Rohan 15); Bharath SU 69 (Akshay Prasad 35) bt Devanga Union 61 (Vishnu 20, Saurab 12).

Praggnanandhaa and Humpy post victories

NORWAY CHESS

Sports Bureau

R. Praggnanandhaa and Koneru Humpy posted victories on the opening day of the Norway Chess tournament at Stavanger on Monday. R. Vaishali, however, suffered a loss at the hands of the women's World champion Ju Wenjun of China.

The male World champion from China, Ding Liren drew with former World champion Magnus Carslen in the classical game quickly, in just 14 moves.

But in the Armageddon game that followed he could not force a win; he had to, as he was playing with white. Carslen needed only a draw, which he got in 65 moves.

Right moves: Praggnanandhaa defeated Firouzja while Humpy put it across Cramling. FILE PHOTOS

Praggnanandhaa won his Armageddon against France's Alireza Firouzja, as did Hikaru Nakamura, with black, against Fabiano Caruana..

In the women's event, Humpy, with black, drew her Armageddon game with veteran Swede Pia Cramling.

The results: Open: R. Praggnanandhaa 1.5 bt Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 1; Ding Liren (Chn) 1 lost to Magnus Carlsen (Swe) 1.5; Fabiano Caruana (USA) 1 lost to Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 1.5.
Women: Pia Cramling (Swe) 1 lost to Koneru Humpy 1.5; Wenjun Ju (Chn) 1.5 bt R. Vaishali 1; Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 1 lost to Lei Tingjie (Chn) 1.5.

Attracting America — long night's journey into day

BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

And so to America, where the deer and the antelope play, and soon so too will India and Pakistan and 18 other countries in the T20 World Cup.

Sixteen of the 55 matches will be played in the US, the idea being as much to take cricket to that nation as to mobilise dollars from there.

The US recently beat Bangladesh in a T20 series – the first time they have beaten a Test nation. They are led by wicket-keeper Monank Patel who played Under-19 cricket for Gujarat which should cause some excitement here.

In the inaugural match, US play Canada; symbolic, because these countries played the first-ever international back in 1844. Cricket was an American game then, but lost out to baseball following the Civil War a couple of decades later. Why did this happen?

Tom Melville, in his history of cricket in America (*The Tented Field*) quotes the scholar Melvin Adelman as saying that baseball, with its shorter, rapid transition structure and alternating periods of excitement and dramatic pauses provided Americans with a cultural expression that cricket, with its traditional structural limitations couldn't duplicate. Melville himself sums it up more succinctly: "Cricket failed in America because it never established an American character."

Final frontier

The International Cricket Council sees the US (and China, possibly) as the final frontier, and have been trying to attract an American audience to the sport.

To get youngsters interested in a team sport beyond American football, baseball and basketball might be a tall order.

Yet, unlike in the past, the vehicle being used this time is T20, shorter, quicker, more focused, without drawn games, and involving baseball-style hitting. Perhaps there's hope.

Obvious choice

Cricket returns to the Olympics at Los Angeles in 2028, and the T20 format will be the obvious choice to attract Americans.

There are some five million Indians in the US. But to depend on the expatriate community alone to popularise the sport might be wishful thinking – it will merely remain a niche sport identified with a particular people. Rather like snowkiting or underwater hockey.

Yet, as Joseph O'Neill pointed out in *Netherland*, his novel about (among other things) cricket in America, "the communal phenomenon of New York cricket is underwritten by the same agglomeration of unspeakable individual longings that underwrites cricket played anywhere – longings concerned with horizons and potentials lost long ago, tantalisms that touch on the undoing of losses too private and reprehensible to be acknowledged to oneself. (Is) what we see, when we see men in white take to a cricket field, men imagining an environment of justice?"

Nostalgia a spur

Nostalgia is a spur. After all, it was nostalgia that caused Englishmen to play the game in their colonies, introducing it to the locals. But the conditions that existed then causing a section to imitate the conquerors, or work their way into their good books no longer obtain.

Microsoft Chairman Satya Nadella who played some cricket in his youth and now owns a team in the Major League Cricket (introduced last year, with four teams from the IPL) says, however, "Cricket was a big sport in the US. I hope it comes back." The motivations now are less complicated.

In any case, cricket cannot be too fussed about the ethnicity of its sponsors; the Indian's dollar is just as powerful.

The ICC cannot be unaware of a bonus should American money enter the sport – it will mean a diminishing of India's domination. India's money, television, audience and passion have ensured a uni-polar world in cricket. They call the tune now, and the cricketing world has been dancing to it.

This is not unusual – when England and Australia ruled, they called the shots.

The enormity of cricket's task can be gauged from the US response to soccer. The country hosted the World Cup in 1994 (and will co-host in 2026). Since then they have been in every World Cup except in 2018.

The women's game has been popular, but the progress of the men's, after its rebirth (Major League Soccer was established in 1993), has been slow. Only 5% named soccer as their favourite sport, up from three in the 1990s.

Cricket has adapted itself to America. But will America adapt itself to cricket?